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THOUGHTS FOR THE THOUGHTFUL

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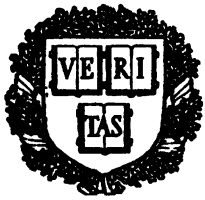

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THOUGHTS FOR THE ∴ ∴ THOUGHTFUL

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

ADELAIDE S. SEAVERNS

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TO

YOUNG PEOPLE

THIS VOLUME OF THOUGHTS, COMPILED WITH CARE

FROM GREAT THINKERS OF THE PRESENT

AND PAST,

IS HOPEFULLY DEDICATED.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is a gratifying privilege to be associated with a volume which is destined to enter upon a large and helpful ministry. By native endowment, culture, and experience, its author and compiler is prepared to make a book that will have a general and permanent mission in the impartation of Christian light and life. Of cheery and optimistic spirit, in active sympathy with all phases of earnest and practical living, with educated and unerring judgment of the best in classic Christian thought, with many years of editorial experience upon a religious weekly, she is thoroughly qualified to produce a volume that will speak with marked impressiveness to a multitude of appreciative readers. These pages are dedicated to "Young People," but their scope and influence will be much larger and more comprehensive.

The supreme value of the book will be found in its *modernness*. In this respect it is unlike any compilation with which we are familiar. The best word

for Christianity—how to appropriate it and how to apply it; in fact, how to incarnate it in human life —has been spoken in the last quarter of the century. In these years especially a multitude of witnesses have stood upon the Mount of Transfiguration, and, "seeing Jesus only," have uttered their vision in poesy and prose almost divine. With alert eye the compiler has watched for the revelation of the chosen men and women who have caught God's latest thought and uttered it. The significant drift of the age is "toward the simplicity" that is in Christ. This book will meet the deeper and intuitive craving of the earnest soul because it is so strikingly Christocentric. Tennyson's prophecy is fulfilled in it:

> "Ring in the valiant man and free,
> The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
> Ring out the darkness of the land,
> Ring in the Christ that is to be."

This volume, also, will enter especially upon a wide and tender ministry of *consolation*. The lonely, the "shut in," the sorrowing, will find in its pages appropriable comfort. Those who "walked the wine press alone" until the Comforter came speak out of their profound experience richest and most timely words of condolence.

"He who hath soothed a widow's woe,
Or wiped an orphan's tear, doth know
There's something here of heaven."

The *companionship* into which we are ushered in this volume is notable, attractive, and ennobling. The choicest spirits and minds thus come into our homes to transform them into holy places. What a delight to enter within the circle of such charming fellowship! Channing said, "No matter how poor I am; no matter though the prosperous of my time will not enter my obscure dwelling, if learned men and poets will enter and take up their abode under my roof." Once introduced into such companionship, the reader will eagerly seek the more extensive writings of the authors here quoted.

Upon such an inspiring and enlarging mission we gratefully and hopefully send forth this book.

CHARLES PARKHURST.

Editorial Rooms of Zion's Herald,
Boston, Mass.

January.

✠

A GLAD New Year or a sad New Year;
O, which shall the New Year be?
I cannot tell what it hath in store,
I would that I might foresee.
But God knows well, and I need no more;
Is that not enough for me?

A glad New Year or a sad New Year;
What matter if dark or light?
The cloudy pillar will guide by day,
The pillar of fire by night;
With these to lead me upon my way,
How can I but walk aright?

A glad New Year or a sad New Year,
'Twill be as the Lord thinks best;
The times and seasons are all His own,
Obeying His high behest;
He ruleth all from His loving throne,
And so is my heart at rest.

—*R. M. Offord.*

First Month.

With joy or with sorrow, perchance with a commingling of both, we now take up, with eager hands and hopeful eyes, a new life volume of three hundred and sixty-five unmarred pages. "What does the year hold for us?" our impatient hearts vainly question. Ah! who knows? Happiness, every earthly joy, for some; for others, a brimming cup of sorrow. But, remember, it is a Father's hand that holds the chalice, either of bliss or of grief; and perhaps even out of discipline and pain will come —not happiness indeed, but instead thereof *blessedness.* For

"behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

THOUGHTS FOR THE THOUGHTFUL.

January 1.

BEAUTIFUL is the year in its coming and in its going—most beautiful and blessed because it is always the Year of Our Lord.—*Lucy Larcom.*

THIS New Year Thou givest me,
Lord, I consecrate to Thee,
With all its nights and days;
Fill my hand with service blest,
Fill my heart with holy rest,
And fill my life with praise!

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

As with doubtful hands we push away the shades and take our first steps in the opening year, the thought cannot fail to come to us all of how little we know what is before us. Living, but living an uncertain life, let the season utter its warnings. One thing is certain, that if you desire improvement in anything it will never come to you accidentally. It must begin in a distinct, resolved purpose to make a change for the better. . . . Here you stand at the parting of the ways; some road you are to take; and as you stand here consider and know how it is that you intend to live. Carry no bad habits, no

corrupting associations, no enmities and strifes, into this new year. Leave these behind, and let the dead Past bury its dead; leave them behind, and thank God that you are able to leave them.

—*Ephraim Peabody.*

January 2.

THERE must be brain service, hand service, foot service, purse service, as well as lip service, if we would see the answer to our prayers.—*Studley.*

I ASKED the New Year for some motto sweet,
Some rule of life with which to guide my feet;
I asked, and paused; he answered soft and low:
"God's will to know."

"Will knowledge then suffice, New Year?" I cried;
And ere the question into silence died,
The answer came: "Nay, but remember, too,
God's will to do."

Once more I asked, "Is there no more to tell?"
And once again the answer sweetly fell:
"Yes! this one thing, all other things above,
God's will to love." —*Anon.*

CONSTANTLY *look up*. Be on the watch for chances to rise, like a bird let loose, though but for a moment, into the upper air. Such is the nature of holiness. Being from God, it is ever seeking to revert to its source. The heavier the pressure of a mundane life upon it, the stronger is the force of its compressed aspirations. Such pressure is like that of the atmosphere on water which seeks, through crevices in its inclosure, the level of its

fountain. A spirit like this will demand the habit of fragmentary prayer for its own holy indulgence, and will demand it with an importunity proportioned to the superincumbent weight of earthly cares.

—Austin Phelps, D.D.

January 3.

JUST take hold of the first thing that comes in your way. If the Lord's got anything bigger to give you, He will see to it.—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

LET us walk onward softly, with our hearts
As open as the leaves are to the sun.
And, like the leaves, that, fluttering in the wind,
Uplift, in turn, both fair sides to the light,
Yet show us tints more delicate below—
Because, perhaps, the dust, stirred everywhere
By hurrying tread of toil or sin or care,
Can find no little spot to cling to there—
So let our inner life a beauty know,
Not even dust-stained with our strife and pride,
And ever fairer on the hidden side.

—Mary Lowe Dickinson.

IN the *Galerie des Beaux Arts* in Paris there stands a famous statue. It was the last work of a great genius who, like many a genius, was very poor and lived in a garret, which served as a studio and sleeping room alike. When the statue was all but finished, one midnight a sudden frost fell upon Paris. The sculptor lay awake in the fireless room and thought of the still moist clay, thought how the water would freeze in the pores and destroy in an hour the dream of his life. So the old man rose

from his couch and heaped the bedclothes reverently round his work. In the morning when the neighbors entered the room the sculptor was dead, but the statue lived.

The image of Christ that is forming within us, that is life's one charge. Let every project stand aside for that. "Till Christ be formed" no man's work is finished, no religion crowned, no life has fulfilled its end. Is the infinite task begun? When, how, are we to be different? Time cannot change men. Death cannot change men. Christ can. Wherefore, *put on Christ.*—*Professor Drummond.*

January 4.

OFTEN the most useful Christians are those who serve their Master in little things. He never despises the day of small things, or else He would not hide His oaks in tiny acorns, or the wealth of a wheat field in bags of little seeds.

—*Theodore Cuyler, D.D.*

YESTERDAY now is a part of forever;
Bound up in a sheaf, which God holds tight,
With glad days, and sad days, and bad days which never
Shall visit us more with their bloom and their blight,
Their fullness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Let them go, since we cannot relieve them,
Cannot undo and cannot atone;
God in His mercy receive, forgive them!
Only the new days are our own.
To-day is ours, and to-day alone.

—*Susan Coolidge.*

January 5.

Poor Little-faith do wake up with a sigh an' a shiver. "I am so different from most people," says poor Little-faith, "an' here's another day come, an' there's so many cares and so many hindrances!" Bless the Lord, I want you young folks to get into a way o' settin' out feelin' quite sure that His religion is made for you. An' not just for going to chapel in your Sunday clothes, either; but for work an' for worries; for wants an' cares like yours an' mine. Little-faith doesn't give religion a chance. He's like them there folks that do go out in the water ankle deep, and then wonder how 'tis that they can't float and swim like other people do. Plunge right into the sea o' His grace, young folks. Start the day thinkin' like this: "There'll be nothin' to-day, but He will help me. There'll be nowhere to-day, but He will be with me. No temptation, but He can deliver me. No burden, but I can cast it 'pon Him. Bless His name." Let the music o' His precious promises ring in our souls and stir us up like the sound o' a trumpet.—*Daniel Quorm.*

Hark, hark! What does the fir tree say
Standing still all night, all day—
Never a moan from over his way,
Green through all the winter's gray—
What does the steadfast fir tree say?

Creak, creak! Listen! "Be firm, be true;
The winter's frost and the summer's dew
Are all in God's time, and all for you;
Only live your life, and your duty do,
And be brave, and strong, and steadfast, and true."

—*Luella Clark.*

January 6.

He who is faithful over a few things is a lord of cities. It does not matter whether you preach in Westminster Abbey or teach a ragged class, so you be faithful. The faithfulness is all.—*George Macdonald.*

Weep your own tears. Ask none to die with you.
—*Mrs. S. M. B. Piatt.*

"O," you say, "I am such a little plant; I do not grow well; I do not put forth as much leafage nor are there so many flowers on me as on many round about me!" It is quite right that you should think little of yourself; perhaps to droop your head is a part of your beauty; many flowers had not been half so lovely if they had not practiced the art of hanging their heads. But "supposing Him to be the gardener," then He is as much a gardener to you as He is to the most lordly palm in the whole domain. In the Mentone garden, right before me, grow the orange and the aloe, and others of the finer and more noticeable plants, but on the wall to my left grow common wall flowers and saxifrages, and tiny herbs such as we find on our own rocky places. Now the gardener has cared for all of them, little as well as great; in fact, there were hundreds of specimens of the most insignificant growths, all duly labeled and described. The smallest saxifrage will say, "He is my gardener just as surely as he is the gardener of the Gloire de Dijon, or Marechal Neil." O feeble child of God, the Lord taketh care of you.—*Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.*

January 7.

IT is not work that kills men, it is worry. Work is healthy; you can hardly put more on a man than he can bear. Worry is the rust on the blade. It is not the revolution that destroys the machinery, but the friction.—*H. W. Beecher.*

BITTER and bleak is the closing day;
The wind goes wailing, the sky is gray,
And there's never a bird on bough or spray,—
Alas, how dreary!

But summer will surely come again.
The earth needs snow and cold and rain,
Just as our hearts need grief and pain.
And so be cheery!

—*James Buckham.*

THE mind wants steadying and setting right many times a day. It resembles a compass placed on a rickety table—the least stir of the table makes the needle swing round and point untrue. Let it settle, then, till it points aright. Be perfectly silent for a few moments, thinking about Jesus; there is almost a divine force in silence. Drop the thing that worries, that excites, that interests, that thwarts you; let it fall like a sediment to the bottom, until the soul is no longer turbid, and say, secretly: "Grant, I beseech Thee, merciful Lord, to Thy faithful servant pardon and peace; that I may be cleansed from all my sins, and serve Thee with a *quiet mind!*"—*Bishop Huntington.*

THE centuries are God's days.—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

January 8.

LOOK at the artist's chisel. The artist cannot carve without it. Yet imagine the chisel, conscious that it was made to carve, and that it is its function, trying to carve alone. It lays itself against the hard marble, but it has neither strength nor skill. Then we can imagine the chisel full of disappointment. "Why cannot I carve?" it cries. Then the artist comes and seizes it. The chisel lays itself into his hand, and is obedient to him. That obedience is faith. It opens the channels between the sculptor's brain and the hard steel. Thought, feeling, imagination, skill, flow down from the deep chambers of the artist's soul to the chisel's edge. The sculptor and the chisel are not two, but one; it is the unit which they make that carves the stone.

We are but the chisel to carve God's statues in this world. Unquestionably we must do the work. But the human worker is only the chisel of the great Artist. The artist needs his chisel; but the chisel can do nothing, produce no beauty, of itself. The artist must seize it, and the chisel lay itself into his hand and be obedient to him. We must yield ourselves altogether to Christ, and let Him use us. Then His power, His wisdom, His skill, His thought, His love, shall flow through our soul, our brain, our heart, our fingers. That is working by faith.—*Phillips Brooks.*

HE's armed without that's innocent within.
—*Alexander Pope.*

January 9.

IT is often in sorrow that our lives are taught their sweetest songs. There is a story of a German baron who stretched wires from tower to tower of his castle, to make a great æolian harp. Then he waited and listened to hear the music from it. For a time the air was still and no sound was heard. The wires hung silent in the air. After a while came gentle breezes, and the harp sang softly. At length came the stern winter winds, strong and stormlike in their forces. Then the wires gave forth majestic music which was heard near and far. There are human lives that never, in the calm of quiet days, yield the music that is in them. When the breezes of common care sweep over them they give out soft murmurings of song. But it is only when the storms of adversity blow upon them that they answer in notes of noble victoriousness.—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

WHEN some beloved voice that was to you
Both sound and sweetness, faileth suddenly,
And silence against which you dare not cry
Aches round you like a strong disease and new—
What hope? what help? what music will undo
That silence to your sense? Not friendship's sigh.
Not reason's subtle count. Not melody
Of viols, nor of pipes that Faunus blew.
Not songs of poets, nor of nightingales,
Whose hearts leap upward through the cypress trees
To the clear moon; nor yet the spheric laws
Self-chanted—nor the angels' sweet All hails
Met in the smile of God. Nay, none of these.
Speak *Thou*, availing Christ!—and fill this pause.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

January 10.

A LIFE spent in brushing clothes, and washing crockery, and sweeping floors—a life which the proud of the earth would have treated as the dust under their feet; a life spent at the clerk's desk; a life spent in the narrow shop; a life spent in the laborer's hut, may yet be a life so ennobled by God's loving mercy that for the sake of it a king might gladly yield his crown.—*Canon Farrar.*

OUT of our pain and struggle,
Up from our grief and dole,
We are swift to cry to the Healer
For the touch that makes us whole.

. . . . . .

Alas! we are not so ready,
In the day of our joy and crown,
With the palms and the fragrant incense
Laid at His altar down;
And how it must grieve the Master
That His own are so slow to praise,
In the flush of their peace and gladness,
The goodness which brims the days!

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

January 11.

THE great human duties are *prayer* and *work:* prayer for every needed blessing, and work to realize it; prayer, as though God must do the whole, and work, as though we must do it all ourselves. These are the two poles of the great galvanic battery. But who that waits to know the philosophy of answered prayer will ever pray? And who that

waits to be sure there shall be no mistake will ever work? The hand that beckons us to glory waves at us out of impenetrable clouds. We walk in a way that we know not. We labor for our Master, but never know beforehand which shall prosper, whether this or that. We lay wise plans, and they miscarry. We commit gross blunders, and they are overruled for good. We run toward the light, and it goes out in darkness. We sink shivering into the darkness, and find it light. We pray for joys, and they mildew into griefs. We accept the griefs, and they blossom into joys. To-day the apple turns to ashes, and to-morrow the stones to bread. We exult in some prosperity, and get leanness with it. We murmur at some adversity, and find it big with blessings. We run toward open doors, and dash our heads against a granite wall. We move against that wall at the call of duty, and it opens to let us through. The lines of our lives are all in God's hands. What shall befall us we cannot know. What is expedient we cannot tell. Only this we know, that God would shape us to Himself, whether it be by the discipline of joy or the discipline of sorrow. To make us perfect as He is perfect, this is the choice of our Heavenly Father, this the end of all His revelations; while everything not helpful to this He hides away out of our sight. Verily, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may

do all the words of this law." Partial revelation, then, is the method, and obedience the end.

—Roswell Dwight Hitchcock, LL.D.

January 12.

THE crown and glory of all true union is for each unit to be at its best. The links, and not the impersonal chain, hold the anchor.

—Bishop John F. Hurst.

WHATEVER hath been written shall remain,
Nor be erased, nor written o'er again;
The unwritten only still belongs to thee;
Take heed and ponder well what that shall be.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

BE certain of this, that no misery can be equal to that which a man feels who is conscious that he has proved unequal to his part, who has deserted the post his captain set him, and who, when men said, "Such and such a one is there on guard, there is no need to take further heed," has left his watch, or quailed before the foeman, to the loss, perhaps the total ruin, of the cause he had made his choice.

—J. H. Shorthouse.

January 13.

IN a castle old and gray
Sighed a heart for rest one day;
Gold and jewels gleamed bright
On this heart from morn till night;
Eastern odors, spicy, sweet,
It exhaled with every beat.
"Love is rest, perhaps," it sighed;
"Love, then, O ye gods, provide!"

Love came in with smile of light,
Clad in raiment dazzling bright;
Rang the castle with his song.
"Tired!" cried the heart ere long.
"Love's not rest," the poor heart sighed—
"Rest for me, ye gods, provide!
Hateful is this castle old,
Hateful jewels, spices, gold,
Hateful passion—hateful all
That the world doth blessing call!"

. . . . . .

Clad in garments meager, plain,
Out where lived a soul in pain,
Went this heart to seek for rest,
Doubting ever of its quest.

Day by day increasing glad
Served the heart that soul so sad;
Base ingratitude it met,
But this made it gladder yet;
Day by day self fled away,
Love alone the heart did sway.
Hark! 'tis singing now above—
"*Rest is serving those we love!*"

—*Lucy Agnes Hayes.*

January 14.

So impossible it is to keep our religion from being seen, unless we cast it away; so vain is the thought of hiding the light, unless by putting it out! Sure it is that a secret, unobserved religion cannot be the religion of Jesus Christ. Whatever religion can be concealed is not Christianity. If a Christian could be hid he could not be compared to a city set upon a hill; to the light of the world, the

sun shining from heaven, and seen by all the world below. Never, therefore, let it enter the heart of him whom God hath renewed in the spirit of his mind to hide that light, to keep his religion to himself; especially considering it is not only impossible to conceal true Christianity, but likewise absolutely contrary to the design of the great Author of it.—*John Wesley.*

UNFLINCHING, firm, upon the wrinkled rock
The lichen clings, though skies be void of ruth;
If thou wouldst meet unscathed life's warfare-shock,
Thus must thou cling to truth!

—*Clinton Scollard.*

January 15.

SIN has many tools, but a lie is a handle that fits them all.—*O. W. Holmes.*

WHAT we call little things are merely the causes of great things. . . . One single black speck may be the beginning of a gangrene, of a storm, of a revolution.—*Amiel.*

IN southern Europe grow the larches. When they were first introduced into England, the gardeners took it for granted that they needed warmth to cause them to grow; so they were placed in the hothouses, and at once began to wither and droop. The gardeners became disgusted, and threw them out of doors. They at once began to grow, and became trees of great beauty. So it oftimes becomes necessary for Christ to throw us out

of doors into the cold of reverses, disappointments, sorrow, and pain, that our Christian characters may be developed. It becomes at times necessary that God bring upon us sore trials and bereavements, that we may be brought back to Him and His service. God does not willingly afflict His people; but in order to bless us it is often necessary to put us in a position to receive and appreciate His blessings, though it may be through severe trials and galling crosses.—*C. W. Bibb.*

January 16.

THE good St. Francis of Assisi once stepped down into the cloisters of his monastery and, laying his hand on the shoulder of a young monk, said, "Brother, let us go down into the town and preach." So they went forth, the venerable father and the young man. And they walked along upon their way, conversing as they went. They wound their way down the principal streets, round the lowly alleys and lanes, and even to the outskirts of the town, and to the village beyond, till they found themselves back at the monastery again. Then said the young monk, "Father, when shall we begin to preach?" And the father looked kindly down upon his son and said: "My child, we have been preaching; we were preaching while we were walking. We have been seen—looked at; our behavior has been remarked; and so we have delivered a morning sermon. Ah! my son, it is of no use that

we walk anywhere to preach unless we preach as we walk."—*Paxton Hood.*

FORENOON and afternoon and night; forenoon,
And afternoon, and night; forenoon and—what!
The empty song repeats itself. No more?
Yes, that is life. Make this forenoon sublime,
This afternoon a psalm, this night a prayer,
And time is conquered, and thy crown is won.

—*E. R. Sill.*

January 17.

LIFE is the time for doing. The world is a great workshop, in which there is no room for drones. God Himself worketh as the great master-builder. All creatures fulfill their needed functions, from the angel that hymns God's praise to the insect that floats in the air. There is plenty to do—evil to put down; good to build up; doubters to be directed; prodigals to be won back; sinners to be sought. "What doest thou here?" Up, Christians; leave your cares and do. Do not do in order to be saved; but, being saved, do.

—*F. B. Meyer.*

THOU art my Life; if Thou but turn away,
My life's a thousand deaths. Thou art my Way;
Without Thee, Lord, I travel not, but stray.

My Light Thou art; without Thy glorious sight
Mine eyes are darkened with perpetual night.
My God, Thou art my Way, my Life, my Light!

Thou art my Way; I wander if Thou fly.
Thou art my Light; if hid, how blind am I!
Thou art my Life; if Thou withdraw, I die.

—*Francis Quarles.*

January 18.

IN one of Murillo's pictures in the Louvre he shows us the interior of a convent kitchen; but doing the work there are, not mortals in old dresses, but beautiful white-winged angels. One serenely puts the kettle on the fire to boil, and one is lifting up a pail of water with heavenly grace, and one is at the kitchen-dresser reaching up for plates; and I believe there is a little cherub running about and getting in the way, trying to help. What the old monkish legend that it represented is I do not know. But as the painter puts it to you on his canvas, all are so busy, and working with such a will, and so refining the work as they do it, that somehow you forget that pans are pans and pots pots, and only think of the angels, and how very natural and beautiful kitchen work is—just what the angels would do, of course. It is the angel aim and standard in an act that consecrates it. He who aims for perfectness in a trifle is trying to do that trifle holily.—*Rev. W. C. Gannett.*

January 19.

THERE is no service like his that serves because he loves.—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

SHE doeth little kindnesses,
Which most leave undone or despise;
For naught which sets one heart at ease,
And giveth happiness or peace,
Is low-esteemèd in her eyes.

—*J. R. Lowell.*

THERE are shining doors of opportunity daily opened on us; there are fair and noble chances which meet us with each day's new dawning; and because we use them not, at last the bitter weeping waits us in the years which have no light. We create not only difficulties for ourselves, but impossibilities; not merely entanglements, but reversions of unspeakable remorse; and then when the knowledge of our folly rushes on us, we cry, "O, if I only had; if I only had not!" But the great doors of opportunity are barred and bolted, and it is too late. It might have been! Words of ineffable mournfulness, but daily uttered.—*W. J. Dawson.*

January 20.

FAINT not; the miles to heaven are few and short.—*Samuel Rutherford.*

A CHRISTIAN is just one who does what the Lord Jesus tells him. Neither more nor less than that makes one a Christian.—*George Macdonald.*

O, YE who taste that love is sweet,
Set waymarks for all doubtful feet
That stumble on in search of it.

Lead life of love; that others who
Behold your life may kindle, too,
With love, and cast their lot with you.
—*Christina G. Rossetti.*

AN eclipse of the sun is not caused by any change in the sun, but by an opaque body, the offspring and satellite of the earth, coming between the earth

and the sun. And so when Christian men lose the sight of God's face it is not because there is any variableness or shadow of turning in Him, but between Him and them has come the blackness—their own offspring—of their own sin.—*Dr. A. Maclaren.*

January 21.

NEVER further than Thy cross;
Never higher than Thy feet;
Here earth's precious things seem dross;
Here earth's bitter things grow sweet.

Gazing thus our sins we see,
Learn Thy love while gazing thus;
Sin, which laid the cross on Thee,
Love, which bore the cross for us.

Here we learn to serve and give,
And, rejoicing, self deny;
Here we gather love to live,
Here we gather faith to die.

—*Mrs. Elizabeth Charles.*

THERE is a mountain in Scotland called Cairngorm—literally, "The Blue Mountain"—and on it are found valuable rock crystals. The way in which the Highlanders gather the stones called cairngorms is this: When there is a sun-burst after a violent shower they go and look along the whole brow of the mountain for certain sparkling spots; the shower has washed away the loose earth, the sunbeams light upon and are reflected from the stones, and thus they are detected. It is just God's way of bringing forth His own. They have the violent shower, and then God sends His light and discovers His jewels.—*Dr. Cumming.*

January 22.

STRANGELY do some people talk of "getting over" a great sorrow—overleaping it, passing it by, thrusting it into oblivion. Not so. No one ever does that—at least no nature which can be touched by the feeling of grief at all. The only way is to pass through the ocean of affliction solemnly, slowly, with humility and faith, as the Israelites passed through the sea. Then its very waves of misery will divide, and become to us a wall on the right side and on the left, until the gulf narrows and narrows before our eyes, and we land safe on the opposite shore.—*Dinah Muloch Craik.*

AND we can well afford to wait a season,
Till all that now is dark shall be made bright,
If not with earthly, then with heavenly light,
And we shall come at last to know the reason
Of all the toil, the seeming loss, the pain,
The silent vanishing of some dear face,
The weary gazing at the vacant place—
All this, and more, shall in God's time come plain.
Hope, then, my soul, and let thy trust abound!
His mercies fail not. Every morning new
They come to thee, as to the flowers the dew.
O, in all cares and sorrows thou hast found
His grace sufficient for thee hitherto;
It will be to the end, if thou art true. —*Anon.*

January 23.

WELL, to suffer is divine;
Pass the watchword down the line,
Pass the countersign, "Endure!"
Not to him who rashly dares,
But to him who nobly bears,
Is the victor's garland sure. —*J. G. Whittier.*

THERE will come times when you are tempted to great sin which will appear to you absolutely safe from discovery and not likely to inflict the slightest injury on your fortunes. In such circumstances nothing will sustain you if you do not respect your own nature and stand in awe of your own conscience. Nay, even this is not enough; the only effective defense is that of one who was sorely tempted in this very way: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" There are secret battles fought and victories won on this ground, never heard of on earth, but essentially more glorious than many victories which are trumpeted far and wide by the breath of fame. There is more of courage and manhood needed for them than for walking up to the cannon's mouth. Walking up to the cannon's mouth! Many a soldier could do that who could not say "No" to two or three companions pressing him to enter the canteen. Not long ago I was speaking to a soldier who told me that many a time in the barracks he was the only man to go down on his knees out of twenty or thirty, and he did it among showers of oaths and derision. Do you think walking up to the cannon's mouth would have been difficult to that man? Such victories have no record on earth; but be sure of this, they are widely heard of in heaven, and there is One there who will not forget them.—*Rev. James Stalker, D.D.*

Too low they build who build beneath the stars.
—*Edward Young.*

January 24.

OUR life is but a little holding, lent
To do a mighty labor. We are one
With heaven and the stars when it is spent
To serve God's aim.

—*George Meredith.*

"THOUGH there ain't no pulpits and pews, there's a sight of brotherly love round in them seats, and pious practice as well as powerful preaching in that shabby desk. He don't need no commandments painted up behind him to read on Sunday, for he keeps 'em in his heart and life all the week, as honest as man can."—*Louisa M. Alcott.*

January 25.

LIFE all past
Is like the sky when the sun sets in it,
Clearest when farthest off.

—*D. G. Rossetti.*

THERE is a species of century plant called the maguey. It grows for years with great, coarse leaves, as thick as your two hands, broad as three, and long as twenty. It puts out sharp thorns, and is as ugly a thing as grows, and it gets worse all the time. But suddenly it shoots up in a few days a great shaft tall and thick as a small telegraph pole, and decks its spreading head with thousands of flowers. The possibility of all that fragrant beauty was always in that detestable ugliness. So humanity grows through the centuries, getting more ugly and savage, putting out thorns that are bayonets, and swords that slay, and with no promise but that of

getting worse. But suddenly some tall Huss, or Savonarola, or Wesley, shoots up aloft and crowns humanity with a wealth of flowers and fruit. Individual men develop in the same way. There are sudden growths provided for in their nature. It makes no difference how ugly and depraved a man may be, he is constitutionally provided with a possibility of flowering into vernal beauty and bearing fruit unto eternal life.—*Bishop H. W. Warren.*

January 26.

THE way stretched out before her, straight and fair,
The way she longed to go.
He said, "Nay, frail one, do not enter there,
I would not have it so;"
And then she turned, with tears and prayers, about,
And entered in the narrow way He pointed out.

It led her straight away from joy and light—
Ah! fully well she knew!
It led her out into a starless night
All damp and wet with dew;
But then it led to heavenly things so dear,
That earth's weak children reach so seldom here.

When years had gone, He said unto her heart,
In sweetly tender voice,
"Wouldst tread the lovely way you thought so fair?
I give thee now the choice."
"Nay, Lord," she said, "this narrow way with Thee
Is far the best and dearest way to me."

—*Presbyterian.*

January 27.

To shrink from unveiling our purest and most loving selves, because of the scoffing skepticism and shameless selfishness of the world, is in it-

self a refined unbelief and subtle selfishness. There is a moral cowardice in our concealment of the spiritual deeps of our beings through disgust at the baseness of the real life we see about us. We whose fallen lives have been high-lifted by Christ's pierced hands; we who have looked into the face of truth that was spit upon; we whose foul hearts have been cleansed by the mercy that flowed in the blood of Golgotha; we who have watched the Lord Jesus bear upon His scourged back the cross of our shame —what infidels are we to repress and turn into darkness the light that struggles to shine, even dimly, from our poor lives!—*Rev. Geo. D. Herron.*

January 28.

"LET me be king, and wear the crown!" I cried.
I serve, instead.
"I would be rich and feed the poor," I sighed.
I toil for bread.

Now, what is life if one must be denied
Each dear request?
They who in shadow of the cross abide
Learn God knows best.

—*Annie M. Libby.*

AFTER the celebrated painter Da Vinci had completed his immortal painting of the "Last Supper" a friend came in to inspect it. "That goblet is wonderful," said the friend; "it stands out like solid silver." The devout artist dashed his brush over the goblet in an instant, and exclaimed, "Nothing shall draw the eye of the beholder from my Lord!" O Christian worker, keep Christ in

the foreground! Let nothing hide thy Saviour from the sight of men. Your mission is to point out "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world."—*Anon.*

January 29.

DON'T take up everything. The Lord seldom gives *one* great, outside mission; He never gives half a dozen at a time.—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

WINTER preaches hope and faith. When the trees are leafless, and the ground is bare of grass and flowers, and covered, perhaps, with snow, it is not sense that tells us of the glorious outburst of life that will follow a few months hence. It is experience of such deliverances of nature from the frost-chain, and faith in that succession of fruitful seasons which God has established for human welfare. So in the winter of the spirit, and of society on its spiritual side, there are times when, if we took counsel with sense, the heart might faint and despair. But God "keeps spring with Him alway," and

> "Whoever sees, 'neath winter's fields and snow,
> The silent harvest of the future good,
> God's power must know."
>
> —*Sunday School Times.*

January 30.

THERE may be saints who have no higher mission than to sit still and wrap themselves in ecstatic dreams; but those who are closest to their

Lord's heart know that His life, when it beats through theirs, moves their hands irresistibly toward acts of tender human sympathy like His "who went about doing good."—*Lucy Larcom.*

LIFE is another thing when once a great love has entered it. Who has not known how love turned pain to pleasure and made sacrifices sweet? Love never talks of crosses and of losses. It calls its losses gains and its crosses crowns. "*For my sake*" makes even death a delight. When we so love the Lord with all the heart, then to follow Him fully is our own choice. . . . It is a little thing for love to respond to an uttered wish. It studies and anticipates the pleasure of the Beloved. The loving heart escapes a thousand difficulties which others meet, and a truly devoted life is not often puzzled by details of duty. Such perplexities are often the simple result of a discordant will, seeking at once to please itself and avoid displeasing God. When the Lord has enlarged the heart, then it "runs" in the way of His commandments.

—*Sarah F. Smiley.*

January 31.

ALL things fulfill their purpose, low or high;
There is no failure; death can never mar
The least or greatest of the things that are.
Until our work is done, we cannot die;
When it is done, it matters not how nigh
May be the night-time that is never far,
That long ere sunset lights the evening star
Throws its still shadow up into the sky.

To-day shall end what yesterday begun;
What we are planning others yet may build;
The leaves may wither, but the tree shall grow;
And though, at last, we leave our work undone,
Our life will not the less be all fulfilled,
Our work will all be even finished so.

Chambers' Journal.

"THY word is a lamp unto my feet," said the psalmist of old. You want your lamp to burn as brightly as possible. You trim the wick; you wash, dry, and polish the glass chimney; you keep the shade clean. Let the dust gather and the smoke make its sooty deposit, and the wick become crisp and hard and black, and the light upon the open page is flickering and weak. The lamp is your friend, but you must take good care of it. It will treat you as you treat it. The figure may be homely, but it is true. What the Bible brings to you will depend in large measure upon what you bring to it. You may have a crumb, or a loaf, or a granary full to bursting, just as you choose. There is gold on its surface, there are jewels in its mines, there are royal pearls in its depths. All are not equally equipped for its study; but every one of us can do his utmost in its patient, loving study, and no labors will bring a surer or a richer reward.—*A. J. F. Behrends, D.D.*

February.

✠

UNWARMED by any sunset light
The gray day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl dance of the blinding storm.

. . . . . .

The moon above the eastern wood
Shone at its full; the hill-range stood
Transfigured in the silver flood,
Its blown snows flashing cold and keen,
Dead-white, save where some sharp ravine
Took shadow, or the somber green
Of hemlocks turned to pitchy black
Against the whiteness at their back.

—*Whittier's "Snow-Bound."*

SECOND MONTH.

A LEAFLESS tree—is there anything to compare with it in symmetry and beauty of structure? To the careless observer the outer world in the winter season presents little that is attractive; but to one whose soul is ever open to the influences of nature, the winter landscape is a wonderful teacher. Mark the exquisite architecture of that bare, brown tree crowning the summit of the wind-swept hilltop! Against the clear, sunset-tinted sky how vividly the delicate outlines are traced, every branch and little twig cut in silhouette sharpness, while the rosy light glorifies the whole.

Does your life seem desolate and bare, O sorrowing one? Do you stand alone, stripped of all that made living a joy and a blessing, on the bleak summit of unutterable grief where the cold winds of despair beat fiercely upon your unsheltered head? O bear up bravely, bereaved soul! Into your darkened life the blessed Sun of Righteousness is ready to pour His cheering, vivifying rays, irradiating its gloom with a glory indescribable.

"Ah! Lord, dear Lord, my life is dry and bare;
How stript of summer grace is known to Thee.
Shall nights of weariness and days of care
Be pleasing in Thy sight? Yea, passing fair,
If thus Thy love stream through me, so I be
Within Thy gracious light a naked tree."

February 1.

EARTH hath been known to whisper low yet clear
Strange consolation for the wintry days.
O listen, then, ye singers! learn and tell
Those who must labor by the dusty ways.—*Annie Fields.*

WINTER, no doubt, is not the pleasant season that summer brings, with her songs and flowers and long bright summer days. Bitter medicines, no doubt, are not savory meat; yet he who believes that all things shall work together for good will be as ready to thank God for the winter frost that kills the weeds and breaks up the soil as for the dewy nights and sunny days that ripen the fields of corn. May God give us such a faith! Let me have a firm faith in God's truth and love; let me be confident that He will do what He has said and perform all that He has promised, and I shall discover mercy's bow bent on fortune's blackest cloud, and, under the most trying providences, shall enjoy in my heart, and exhibit to others in my temper, the blessed difference between a sufferer that mourns and a spirit that murmurs.—*Thomas Guthrie.*

February 2.

A TRAVELER among the mountains of Madeira set out for a distant summit, but was soon lost in a thick mist. He would have despaired, but his guide kept calling out from before, "Press on, master; press on. There's light beyond." When God calls out, "Be strong; I am with you," we need not fear.—*J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.*

BEFORE the hearth I dream of many things.
The red-eyed embers glow, dull down, expire;
An evanescent life in each, that brings
Sad omens for the Life that men desire.
Will it not end in ashes, like the fire?

Not death is here, but change! Each spark that gleams
Is pent-up sunlight, and the back-log's tune
Repeats the music of the woods and streams.
Bend low and listen; it is nature's rune,
Singing of summer, chanting soft of June.

—*Richard Burton.*

February 3.

IF any little word of mine
May make a life the brighter,
If any little song of mine
May make a heart the lighter,
God help me speak the little word,
And take my bit of singing
And drop it in some lonely vale,
To set the echoes ringing! —*Anon.*

AN earthly life, though brief as a summer's day, if it exhibit the graces of Christian faith, has accomplished its mission. Christ exclaimed, at the age of thirty-three, "It is finished!" Paul cannot say the same until seventy winters have withered his frame, and even then with a far less sense of completeness than was felt by his Lord and Master after three years of His ministry. Abel finished his course early, Methuselah late; Stephen died young, John in the total decrepitude of exhausted age; John the Baptist was a youthful preacher when suddenly summoned away, Peter went trembling with years to his cross and crown; John Huss ascended in his

chariot of fire while still in his early prime, Polycarp carried the weight of eighty years to his triumphant death. So will it always be. "Her sun goeth down while it is yet day," will yet be said over many a maiden's coffin. "He dies in the flower of his days," will yet be placed on many a headstone. But, long or short, if you have given your heart to Jesus, if you have served Him with a humble and steadfast mind, your life will have a finished beauty that all will admire and long to imitate. Your name will be as ointment poured forth. Your friends and foes shall alike arise and call you blessed.

—*Bishop Gilbert Haven.*

February 4.

GET into the habit of looking at the silver lining of the cloud, and, when you have found it, continue to look at it rather than at the leaden gray in the middle. It will help you over many hard places.—*A. A. Willis, D.D.*

Lo! amid the press,
The whirl and hum and pressure of my day,
I hear Thy garments sweep, Thy seamless dress,
And close beside my work and weariness,
Discern Thy gracious form, not far away,
But very near, O Lord! to help and bless.

The busy fingers fly, the eyes may see
Only the glancing needle which they hold,
But all my life is blossoming inwardly,
And every breath is like a litany;
While through each labor, like a thread of gold,
Is woven the sweet consciousness of Thee!

—*Susan Coolidge.*

I CAN'T abide to see men throw away their tools i' that way the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure i' their work, and was afraid of doing a stroke too much. I hate to see a man's arm drop down as if he was shot before the clock fairly struck, just as if he'd never a bit o' pride and delight in 's work. The very grindstone 'll go on turning a bit after you loose it.

—*George Eliot.*

February 5.

IN winter there are no roses blooming in the deserted, wind-swept, snow-covered garden. Nor in summer do crystal snows fly fair. Each season has it own work, its own beauty, and by hands of another season this work cannot be done, this beauty cannot be breathed. And so of man's life. Each season has its own duties and its own joys; and if they are not laid hold of, no other season can make up the loss; they are gone down the dim, untraversed river of Forever. Each day, indeed, has its own duty, its own smile, its own tear, its own heart-throb. If only it be lived in for itself, life would be fuller and richer in everything; and the clusters of blessedness hanging from the boughs of each day would proclaim life's every season to have wrought well, and to deserve well, for what lies before. Alas! that we let the burdening to-morrows crush the energy and strength out of to-day, so that its work is undone or marringly done. Give your to-day a chance, my brother. Give it only its own

work to do, and evening will find you laughing over the beauty and faithfulness that smiles up to you from the well-done duties; and the eternal to-morrow will meet you with kisses of tenderness, not with wounding blows.—*Thought Etchings.*

IF we were told—and attestation came
From thousands who had seen Him—that once more
Christ walked Judea's valleys as of yore,
And that His marvelous power was just the same
As when He wrought the miracles whose fame
Spread from the Syrian coast to Jordan's shore—
Would we not hasten lands and oceans o'er,
Urged by one passionate, one consuming aim,
To see and hear, touch, and find peace?
And yet—
What countless multitudes have proved it true!—
Through faith's clear vision, He to us may be
Nearer than to the crowds within whose view
He stood upon the slopes of Olivet,
Or sat and taught by the Tiberian sea.

—*Margaret J. Preston.*

February 6.

I TAKE a grain of wheat, and my friend, who is a chemist, analyzes it for me. He tells me that grain has just so much carbon and hydrogen, and just so much coloring matter and other substances. He weighs them all accurately, and I ask him to make a grain of wheat for me. He takes the same weight of carbon, of hydrogen, of coloring matter, and of all the other materials; he recomposes the grain of wheat. I take the two grains in my hand—the grain of natural wheat and this one—they look the same, weigh the same, have precisely the same form, and I cannot tell them apart. I plant them; the

natural grain sprouts, but on the other grain may fall the sunlight and dews of a thousand years. There is no sprout—and why? The one has life and the other has not. What is the difference? The chemist found no difference; he could not find the principle of life which God put there invisibly. All the chemist found he replaced; but there was no life; he could not give that. Now, it is so with the word of God. I read there the same letters that are in the books of science and philosophy; I put them together in sentences and paragraphs, just as I would arrange the words of Xenophon, Plato, or some other philosopher. When I read other men's words the thought may charm my intellect; but when I read the words of the Bible they come to my heart with power and life.

—*Bishop Matthew Simpson.*

February 7.

FAR up on sternest Alpine crests,
Where winds of tempest blow,
They say that, all unfearing, rests
A flower upon the snow—
A tiny flower, pale and sweet,
That blooms o'er breath of ice;
And glad are they, on any day,
Who find the edelweiss.

Ah! far on heights of sorrows cold,
Where tears are dropping slow,
Some hearts have found, and, finding, told
How fair a flower may grow.
With petals pale, but perfume rare,
It garlands days of ice;
And blessed are they who, weeping, pray,
And find faith's edelweiss.

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

A STAGE-DRIVER had held the lines for many years, and when he grew old his hands were crooked into hooks, and his fingers were so stiffened that they could not be straightened out. There is a similar process that goes on in men's souls when they continue to do the same things over and over. One who is trained from childhood to be gentle, kindly, patient, to control the temper, to speak softly, to be loving and charitable, will grow into the radiant beauty of love. One who accustoms himself to think habitually and only of noble and worthy things, who sets his affections on things above, and strives to reach "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely," will grow continually upward toward spiritual beauty. But, on the other hand, if one gives way from childhood to all ugly tempers, all resentful feelings, all bitterness and anger, his life will shape itself into the unbeauty of these dispositions. One whose mind turns to debasing things, things unholy, unclean, will find his whole soul bending and growing toward the earth in permanent moral curvature.—*J. R. Miller.*

February 8.

THIS I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream:
There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;
And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged
A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords
Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner
Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.

A craven hung along the battle's edge,
And thought, "Had I a sword of keener steel—
That blue blade that the king's son bears—but this
Blunt thing!" He snapped and flung it from his hand,
And lowering crept away and left the field.
Then came the king's son wounded, sore bestead,
And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,
Hilt buried in the dry and trodden sand,
And ran and snatched it, and with battle shout
Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,
And saved a great cause that heroic day. —*E. R. Sill.*

JUST as you now play a piece without the music and do not think what notes you strike, though once you picked them out by slow and patient toil, so if you begin of set purpose, you will learn the law of kindness in utterance so perfectly that it will be second nature to you, and make more music in your life than all the songs the sweetest voice has ever sung.—*Frances E. Willard.*

February 9.

"I DON'T know which ever is worst, to see the beautiful times that there are in the world and not be in 'em, or to see people that might be in 'em and ain't!"—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

IT is our misfortune that we mistake God's shadow for the night. If a man stands between you and the sun His shadow falls upon you. So God sometimes comes and stands between us and worldly successes, and His shadow falls upon us, and we wrongly think that it is night.—*T. De Witt Talmage.*

A FRIEND told us that he was visiting a lighthouse lately, and said to the keeper, "Are you not afraid to live here? It is a dreadful place to be constantly in." "No," replied the man, "I am not afraid; we never think of ourselves here." "Never think of yourselves! How is that?" The reply was a good one: "We know that we are perfectly safe, and only think of having our lamps brightly burning and keeping the reflectors clear, so that those in danger may be saved." That is what Christians ought to do. They are safe in a house built on a rock which cannot be moved by the wildest storm; and, in a spirit of holy unselfishness, they should let their light gleam across the dark waters of sin, that they who are imperiled may be guided into the harbors of eternal safety.—*The Quiver.*

February 10.

CHARGE not thyself with the weight of a year,
Child of the Master, faithful and dear.
Choose not the cross for the coming week,
For that is more than He bids thee seek.

Bend not thine arms for to-morrow's load—
Thou may'st leave that to thy gracious God.
Daily only He saith to thee,
"Take up thy cross, and follow Me." —*Anon.*

THY God shall supply every need. Here is a key to open every door before which we pause, saying, "How shall I get through?"—a mighty master-key for the regions of Giant Despair, for every lock in Doubting Castle. "I have a key in

my bosom called Promise," said Hopeful; and he had forgotten to take it out.—*Anna B. Warner.*

February 11.

I MADE the cross myself, whose weight
Was later laid on me.
This thought adds anguish as I toil
Up life's steep Calvary.

To think my own hands drove the nails!
I sang a merry song,
And chose the heaviest wood I had
To build it firm and strong.

If I had guessed—if I had dreamed
Its weight was meant for me,
I should have built a lighter cross
To bear up Calvary!

—*Anne Reeve Aldrich.*

THERE is no journey of life but has its clouded days; and there are some days in which our eyes are so blinded with tears that we find it hard to see our way or even read God's promises. Those days that have a bright sunrise followed by sudden thunderclaps and bursts of unlooked-for sorrows are the ones that test certain of our graces the most severely. Yet the law of spiritual eyesight very closely resembles the law of physical optics. When we come suddenly out of the daylight into a room even moderately darkened we can discern nothing; but the pupil of our eye gradually enlarges until unseen objects become visible. Even so the pupil of the eye of faith has the blessed faculty of enlarging in dark hours of bereavement, so that we discover

that our loving Father's hand is holding the cup of trial, and by and by the gloom becomes luminous with glory. The fourteenth chapter of John never falls with such music upon our ears as when we catch its sweet strains amid the pauses of some terrific storm: "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. I will not leave you comfortless."

— Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

February 12.

READ your Bibles. Fill your whole souls with the thought of Christ; make Him not only a Redeemer, but a Brother; not only a Saviour, but a Friend.—*Canon Farrar.*

ACROSS the field of daily work
Run the footprints leading—where?
Run they east or run they west,
One way all the workers fare.
Every awful thing of earth,
Sin and pain and battle-noise,
Every dear thing—baby's birth,
Faces, flowers, or lovers' joys—
Is a wicket-gate where we
Join the great highway to Thee!

Restless, restless, speed we on;
Whither in the vast unknown?
Not to you and not to me
Are the sealed orders shown;
But the Hand that built the road,
And the Light that leads the feet,
And this inward restlessness,
Are such invitations sweet,
That where I no longer see,
Highway still must lead to Thee!

—Rev. William C. Gannett.

February 13.

WHEN I was young I used to look at men of my present age and think, "You have to die pretty soon, and you must feel badly about it." I suppose that young people have the same thoughts about us. For myself, and so far as I know the feelings of others, we do not give ourselves any care on the subject. We regard it with indifference. Most of us are interested in other things. We would like to see our church in a better condition. We want to help all we can on all work for our fellow-men. We do not want any who ride on our several drays left stuck in the mud. But as for Death, we calculate on his minding his own business as we mind ours. We do not regard him as a personage of much consequence. Who is he? Nobody but the Lord's liveried servant, standing in silence at the door to swing it open. There is no more reason why we should pay any attention to him than to his prototype at the door of a mansion to which one is invited. We do not think of him. We see the light in the broad windows, forms behind the lace curtains, and catch a strain of music, a whiff of the flowers, and hear the buzz of voices—and we feel by anticipation the clasp of our hand and see smiling faces of welcome. What has the black-plumed porter to do with us, only to open the door?—*W. C. Gray, D.D.*

THOU art no dreamer, O thou stern To-day!
The dead past has its dreams; the real is thine.
—*Julia C. R. Dorr.*

February 14.

THE parish priest
Of Austerity
Climbed up in a high church steeple,
To be nearer God,
So that he might hand
His word down to the people.

. . . . . .

And in sermon script
He daily wrote
What he thought was sent from heaven;
And he dropped this down
On the people's heads
Two times one day in seven.

In his age God said,
"Come down and die;"
And he cried out from the steeple,
"Where art Thou, Lord?"
And the Lord replied,
"Down here, among my people."

—Brewer Mattocks.

THAT little sin is, if you would see it, like scratching with a pen through and through a writing on a parchment. What is this writing? What is this parchment? It is a title-deed to an inheritance, an inheritance of the saints in light. You are quietly erasing your name from it and blotting its fair characters. When you come to the day of account you will show your claim, and it will be illegible. "What," you will say, "am I to lose this great possession for this trifling scratch of the pen?" "Even so," says the Inexorable; "it is precisely in this way that the inheritance is lost; not, as a rule,

by deliberate and reckless destruction of the mighty treasure, but by the thoughtless triviality, the indolent easefulness. See you, it is the work of your own hand. 'His own iniquities shall take the wicked.'" He said God would not punish a poor creature like him. God does not punish him. No, there is God making level all his paths now as of old. This punishment is not God's; it is his own. "His own iniquities have taken the wicked; he is held with the cords of his sin." Here then is the plain, stern truth—a law not of nature only, but of the universe.—*Rev. R. F. Horton.*

February 15.

IF the way of heaven be narrow, it is not long; and if the gate be strait, it opens into endless life.

—*Bishop Beveridge.*

Do to-day's duty, fight to-day's temptation, and do not weaken and distract yourself by looking forward to things which you cannot see, and could not understand if you saw them.—*Charles Kingsley.*

AND as we climb the stair
Of rough and ugly fortune, by the props
Of faith and charity, and hope and prayer,
To the serene and beauteous mountain tops
Of our best human possibility,
Where haunts the spirit of eternity,
The world below looks fair—
Its seeming inequalities subdued,
And level, all, to purposes of good

—*Alice Cary.*

THE same occupation, whether it be work, prayer, or amusement, if constant, would make us stupid and gloomy. You can dig in the dirt until you become a brute, pray until the habit makes you a monk, and play until you become a mere puppet. Combine the three. Your work will be more fruitful, your religion more cheerful.—*Bjornson.*

February 16.

BELOVED, let us love so well
Our work shall still be better for our love,
And still our love be sweeter for our work.
—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

PRAYER does not consist in asking for *things;* and answers to prayer do not come chiefly in the giving of *things.* Matthew reports Christ as saying that the Father gives good things to them that ask Him. Luke reports Him as saying that the Father gives the Holy Spirit. Luke's report is more in the spirit of the Master. We do not recall any instance in which Christ asked for things, unless it be in the one petition for "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer. Prayer is fellowship with God; communion with Him; the meeting of spirit with spirit. Courage flows from the heart of God into that of man, and strength to nerve his weakness, and hope to deliver him from despair, and comfort to make him strong to bear his burden. The Christian may doubt whether God gives *things,* but he cannot doubt that God gives Himself. . . . That man may speak to God, and, if he will listen, may

hear God speaking to him. There are all about him deaf men that hear not the Voice, but this does not cause him for an instant to relinquish his faith in the Voice which he hears.—*Christian Union.*

February 17.

WHY should we live halfway up the hill and swathed in mists, when we might have an unclouded sky and a visible sun over our heads if we would only climb higher and walk in the light of His face?—*Dr. A. Maclaren.*

LIFE is indeed no holiday; therein
Are want and woe and sin,
Death and its nameless fears, and over all
Our pitying tears must fall.

. . . . . .

The hours draw near, howe'er delayed and late,
When at the eternal gate
We leave the words and works we call our own
And lift void hands alone

For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that gate no toll;
Giftless we come to Him who all things gives,
And live because He lives.

—*From Whittier's Last Poem.*

February 18.

OUT of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seamed with scars; martyrs have put on their coronation robes glittering with fire, and through their tears have the sorrowful first seen the gates of heaven.—*E. H. Chapin.*

Do you not see that really it is the people of one talent who make the world go round? The people of one talent are mostly needed; that is why there are most of them. We have only one head to two hands and two feet. I went round the world in a floating palace; but I drove to my door in a four-wheeled cab. What would your five talents and your two talents do without your one? I stood a while ago and looked at a drinking fountain. A marble angel, beautifully sculptured, stood pointing to heaven. Then came polished granite inscribed with gilt letters and massive slabs of stone. But I noticed that the water came through a small brass pipe, and the people drank from an iron cup attached to an iron chain. And the marble angel pointing heavenward would have done nobody any good but for the brass pipe and iron cup. Think if the pipe had said, "If they do not make me of gold I will not belong to the thing." Or if the cup had said, "I must be of silver, or I shall be ashamed to be there at all." No, I thought I heard the music of the three—common water, common pipe, and common cup. "Well," they sang, "they can't do without us, and we must do our part along with the marble angel and polished granite."—*Mark Guy Pearse.*

February 19.

THE speculum of the largest telescope foils the optician's skill in casting. Too much or too little heat, the interposition of a grain of sand, a slight

alteration in the temperature of the weather, and all goes to pieces ; it must be recast. When successfully finished it is a matter for the congratulation of a country. To have secured the more delicate and difficult achievement of a well-rounded Christian character is infinitely better still.—*Roberts.*

WE shall not be always in the fight, but we must be always on the watch ; and when we have struck every blow and won every victory in our power, then we are not invited to sit down in some cool retreat and rest upon our laurels, but "having done all, stand," says God. When the old city of Pompeii was dug out, after having been for eighteen centuries buried, a sentinel was found still standing at his post, his skeleton fingers grasping his sword and his bony feet firmly planted on the pavement. He had time to run before the black smoke had choked him or the black ashes had buried him, but having done all, he stood. Faithful unto death, and faithful in death. And that is a sermon in effigy for us all. We are to endure hardness, to stand, though blackened with the smoke of detraction and riddled through and through with ridicule—and having done all, to stand.—*A. J. Gordon, D.D.*

February 20.

HE who receives but does not give is like the Dead Sea. All the fresh floods of Jordan cannot sweeten its dead, salt depths. So all the streams of

God's bounty cannot sweeten a heart that has no outlet; is ever receiving, yet never full and overflowing.—*Josiah Strong.*

THE secret of life—it is giving;
To minister and to serve;
Love's law binds the man to the angel,
And ruin befalls if we swerve.
There are breadths of celestial horizons
Overhanging the commonest way;
The clod and the star share the glory,
And to breathe is an ecstasy.

Life dawns on us, wakes us, by glimpses;
In heaven there is opened a door!—
That flash lit up vistas eternal;
The dead are the living once more!
To illumine the scroll of creation,
One swift, sudden vision sufficed;
Every riddle of life worth the reading
Has found its interpreter—Christ!

—*Lucy Larcom.*

February 21.

OBEDIENCE must be the struggle and desire of our life; obedience, not hard and forced, but ready, loving, and spontaneous; the doing of duty, not merely that the duty may be done, but that the soul in doing it may become capable of receiving and uttering God.—*Phillips Brooks.*

THIS is what we need—not so much an aggressive as an attractive religion. Men are not at peace; they are hungry for happiness, and they pursue it over sea and land, but they have not found it. If in every Christian they beheld a soul manifestly at

peace with itself, filled with a joy unspeakable which betrayed that it has found the secret life, we should not need to preach to them and plead with them so much: they would come flocking of their own accord like doves to their windows.

—*Rev. James Stalker, D.D.*

February 22.

TO-DAY, who gaze along the years,
The finished time of toils and tears,
That still in varying peace and strife
Have gone to make the nation's life—
Who backward gaze must own the debt
We owe our holiest memory yet;
For all our best, bequeathed, begun,
We needs must honor *Washington*,
Still first among our good and great,
The grandest name that stars the state.

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

February 23.

WE are never without help. We have no right to say of any good work, It is too hard for me to do; or of any sorrow, It is too hard for me to bear; or of any sinful habit, It is too hard for me to overcome.—*Elizabeth Charles.*

ALL hindrances are tests. They try the reality of our resolutions and the genuineness of our purposes. A black sky of a Sunday morning tests the strength of a Christian. Those who are physically or morally weak stay at home. God is every day testing us and in every way. He himself knows us; He has no need for Himself to test us. But we do

not any of us know ourselves perfectly well; and the tests which come with hindrances bring us revelations of ourselves. We all imagine that we are patient and forgiving, and honest and faithful, until we are tested. After that, imagination is translated into knowledge. That is one of the blessings which God sends with every difficulty and grief and trial. Every day we are tested. And the tests dispel delusions. We come to see ourselves as we are. We discover where we are weak. And thus we find out where we need to fortify ourselves and to get strong.—*Rev. George Hodges.*

February 24.

BESIDE a mighty city's gate,
Where passed at morn the proud and great
To seek a sacred shrine that stood
Within the precincts of a wood,
A crippled beggar sat and loud
Besought the ever-passing crowd.
His need was sore, but they denied;
"We seek to find out God!" they cried,
As by the altar, on the sod,
They knelt—"We seek to find out God!"

The day declined. The great and proud,
Who sought that morn the shrine and bowed
Their heads as though in reverence there,
Forgot the shrine, forgot the prayer.
But, lo! the man whom they denied
A pittance as they passed in pride,
Dead by the gateway, knew what they
So vainly sought, as, day by day,
They toward the holy altars trod.
He—he alone—had found out God!

—*Clinton Scollard.*

"So," said the preacher, "I listened to a flute one day, complaining that it was spoiled by having a number of holes bored in it. 'Once,' it said, 'I was a piece of wood, very beautiful to look upon. Now I am spoiled by all these rifts and holes;' and it said all this mournfully and musically. 'O, thou foolish flute!' I said, 'without these rifts and holes thou wouldst only be a mere stick, a bit of mere hard, black ebony, soon to be thrown away. Those rifts and holes have been the making of thee; they have made thee into a flute; they are thy life, thy character, thy music and melody, and thou wilt not now be cast aside with contempt, but touched by even the fingers of future generations.'"

—*Sunday at Home.*

February 25.

SOUL of mine,
Wouldst thou choose for life a motto half divine?
Let this be thy guard and guide
Through the future reaching wide,
Whether good or ill betide,
Rise higher.

From the mire
Where the masses blindly grovel, rise higher!
From the slavish love of gold,
From the justice bought and sold,
From the narrow rules of old,
Rise higher.

. . . . . .

Let each care
Lift thee upward to a higher, purer air;
Then let fortune do her worst,
Whether fate has blessed or cursed,
Little matter, if thou first
Rise higher.

And at last,
When thy sorrows and temptations all are past,
And the great death angel brings
Summons from the King of kings,
Thou shalt still on angel wings
Rise higher.

—*Helen G. Hawthorne.*

February 26.

EVEN among the shadows He gives us His own substantial presence. He wants Himself to be with us in the darkness and gloom. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Are you in darkness to-day? Hear this voice, take this rod and Him that appointed it. Come near to Christ and listen to Him. . . . I remember one night, when I was a lad, lying in my bed at home, long ago. I awoke, and it was dark, and I heard a voice in the night —not a song; I heard the voice of my mother as she lay upon her bed of pain. She was twenty-five years in the valley of the shadow of death. I shall never forget how the sound of her voice came into my dark room and my disquieted heart: "Yea, though I walk through the valley." Think of it rising in the air at two o'clock on a dark winter morning, with the wind howling round your house. Sing it! sing it in the darkness. Sing it now all the more if the valley seems long. You are passing through it, remember. Sing the psalm of heart confidence, and the shadows will become somewhat

luminous with the light that is about to reveal itself —the light of heaven, our eternal home.

—John McNeill.

February 27.

WE are building every day,
In a good or evil way,
And the structure, as it grows,
Will our inmost self disclose—

Till in every arch and line
All our faults and failings shine;
It may grow a castle grand,
Or a wreck upon the sand.

Do you ask what building this,
That can show both pain and bliss,
That can be both dark and fair?
Lo! its name is character

Build it well, whate'er you do;
Build it straight, and strong, and true;
Build it clean and high and broad;
Build it for the eye of God.

—Anon.

"UP and be doing," is the word that comes from God to each of us. Leave some good work behind you that shall not be wholly lost when you have passed away. Do something worth living for, worth dying for; do something to show that you have a mind, and a heart, and a soul within you. . . . Is there no want, no suffering, no sorrow, that you can relieve? Is there no act of tardy justice, no deed of cheerful kindness, no long-forgotten duty that you can perform? Is there no reconciliation

of some ancient quarrel, no payment of some long-outstanding debt, no courtesy, or love, or honor to be rendered to those to whom it has long been due? . . . If there be any such, I beseech you, in God's name, in Christ's name, *go and do it.*—*Dean Stanley.*

February 28.

SOME souls there are like the cactus blossom, surrounded by a prickling mass of ugliness, themselves a marvel of sweetness.—*Union Signal.*

> Yet tenderly often God's face shines through
> The stormy sky like a bit of blue.
> —*Sarah K. Bolton.*

THE light of your lamp may be very faint, so dim to your own inner vision it may seem no light at all; but a spark may kindle another for good or evil, as a match carelessly thrown aside may raise a midnight conflagration, and sleepers who went to their pillows in peace awake in eternity. We cannot read the hearts of others or know what may be working there, but God does, and very simple words of yours may veil the importance of the message you unconsciously deliver; your eyes have been set on the Lord you love; and if your heart is full of Him you may some day learn that from your life's little spark "the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."—*Anna Shipton.*

February 29.

THOUGH winter howleth at the gate,
In our hearts 'tis summer still. —*Epes Sargent.*

LET this day be marked by a kingly deed.
—*Björnson.*

ONE little grain in the sandy bars;
One little flower in the field of flowers;
One little star in a heaven of stars;
One little hour in a year of hours—
What if it makes, or what if it mars?

But the bar is built of the little grains,
And the little flowers make the meadows gay,
And the little stars light the heavenly plains,
And the little hours of each little day
Give to us all that life contains. —*Ernest Whitney.*

THERE should be schools of *listening*. . . . Not only should we learn to listen in order to give opportunity for the profitable speech of others, but we should do so out of charity and good will to our fellow-men. How many weary sick-beds, how many cheerless lives, how many lonely, depressed, and silent men and women, might be gladdened, and for the time transformed, by one who would come, not to speak words of cheer and comfort, but to listen to tales of suffering and trial! Here would be one of the truest forms of charity; an almost unknown joy would be given to the world. There should be brotherhoods and sisterhoods of listeners; like good angels they should go out among those unfortunates who have none to hear that which it would give them so much delight to say.—*Frank R. Stockton.*

March.

✠

"THE morning of the year
Flushes these northern glades."

THE Spring reveals herself in secret only,
Through hidden signs we guess her mystic power;
The fields are bare, the woodlands wild and lonely,
But, lo! beneath the earth she hides the flower.
The willows quicken at the river's brim,
The eager alder breaks her tawny buds,
The upland hills are wrapt in hazes dim,
And sweet, impulsive life has stirred the woods.

—Dora Read Goodale.

THIRD MONTH.

IN northern latitudes wild and blustering March reigns supreme, the snow streaming from his leonine locks as he rides over hillside and plain on the wings of the easterly gales that sweep in from the stormy Atlantic. "We shall have a late spring," sigh the foreboding weather prophets. Regardless of their doleful auguries, with patient eyes we eagerly scan nature's highways and byways for those tiny tokens that whisper of the near approach of springtime loveliness; and there are many such to the seeing eye. Meanwhile

> "The keen north wind pipes loud;
> Swift scuds the flying cloud;
> Light lies the new-fallen snow;
> The ice-clad eaves drip slow;"

and it seems as if the long wintry period would never come to an end. But soon, very soon,

> "Gone will be winter's pain,
> Though sorrows still remain,
> Though eyes with tears be wet;
> The voice of our regret
> We hush, to hear the sweet
> Far fall of summer's feet.
> The heavenly Father wise
> Looks in the saddened eyes
> Of our unworthiness,
> Yet doth He cheer and bless.
> . . . . And soon
> In the calm blaze of noon,
> By lowly window sills
> Will laugh the daffodils."

March 1.

AH! passing few are they who speak,
Wild, stormy month, in praise of thee!
Yet, though thy winds are loud and bleak,
Thou art a welcome month to me.

—Bryant.

IT is a peculiarity of the scrub oak that its tough, leathery leaves do not fall off in the autumn, but may be seen withered, curled up, and clinging to the boughs all through the winter, and they cannot be torn away even by the boisterous winds of March. But the time comes when they must loosen their hold. When the sap begins to flow in the spring the new leaf-bud emerges from its hiding place and pushes off the old leaf. It is so with our old sinful habits. We do not succeed in tearing them off from us by strong resolutions. It is only when there is a new life within, when we enter into the consciousness that God is Love and that He is our Father, when we begin out of sheer gratitude to serve Him —it is then that, by virtue of the activities of the Christian life, we slough off the old evil habits, finding that we have no more use for them than a snake has for last year's skin.—*Rev. Edward Judson.*

March 2.

LOVE thyself last! Drink deep
The nectared anodyne of selflessness.

—Edwin Arnold.

WE live by days. They are the leaves folded back each night in the great volume that we write. They

are our autobiography. Each day takes us not newly, but as a tale continued. It finds us what yesterday left us. . . . And, as we go on, every day is telling to every other day truths about us, showing the kind of being that is handed on to it, making of us something better or something worse, as we decide.—*J. F. W. Ware.*

YONDER locomotive, with its thundering train, comes like a whirlwind down the track, and a regiment of soldiers might seek to arrest it in vain. It would crush them and plunge unheeding on. But there is a little lever in its mechanism that at the pressure of a man's hand will slacken its speed and in a moment or two bring it panting and still like a whipped spaniel at your feet. So, with the firm control of thought, words and actions are obedient to our purpose. He who rules himself is the greatest of monarchs.—*J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.*

March 3.

SIMPLE endurance, standing still under a load that is almost heavier than you can sustain—there is in that no flavor or suggestion of inspiration. Suffering does not nerve a man to endure suffering. There is in it no element of momentum. It reduces simply to a bare matter of staying power. . . . St. Paul moved hither and thither through Asia and Europe in his magnificent missionary tours, and we presume that he was prayerful through them all and sought unto God for His wisdom and grace; but, being human,

he was doubtless kept moving not only by the divine grace, but also by his own stimulated faculties of action, the vastness of his work, and the novelties of the experience into which his enterprise ushered him. But the time when preeminently we do find St. Paul on his knees, seeking unto God in long and importunate prayer, was not when he had a great sermon to preach, or a long epistle to write, or a great journey to make, but when he had a little miserable, pricking, stinging thorn in the flesh to bear. There was nothing that could exactly be called exhilarating in that. It cut into the nerve, but could hardly be said to make nerve.—*Rev. C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*

March 4.

TAKE unto Thyself, O Father!
This folded day of Thine,
This weary day of mine;
Its ragged corners cut me yet,
O, still the jar and fret!
Father, do not forget
That I am tired
With this day of Thine.

Breathe Thy pure breath, watching Father,
On this marred day of Thine,
This wandering day of mine;
Be patient with its blur and blot,
Wash it white of stain and spot;
Reproachful eyes, remember not
That I have grieved Thee
On this day of Thine!

—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

GOD beholds thee individually whoever thou art. "He calls thee by name." He sees thee and understands thee. He knows what is in thee, all thy own peculiar feelings and thoughts, thy dispositions and likings, thy strength and thy weakness. He views thee in thy day of rejoicing and thy day of sorrow. He sympathizes in thy hopes and in thy temptations; He interests Himself in all thy anxieties and thy remembrances, in all the risings and fallings of thy spirit. He compasses thee round, and bears thee in His arms; He takes thee up and sets thee down. Thou dost not love thyself better than He loves thee. Thou canst not shrink from pain more than He dislikes thy bearing it, and if He puts it on thee, it is as thou wilt put it on thyself, if thou art wise, for a greater good afterward.—*Cardinal Newman.*

March 5.

WHO has no inward beauty none perceives,
Though all around is beautiful.

—*R. H. Dana.*

THE divine is in you, and the divine is part of you. The sun comes in March to the earth, and whispers to it and says, O Earth, give forth thy bud and thy blossom and thy waving fields of grain; and the earth says, I cannot, I cannot; I am bound with frost, and all my brooks are icy, and I am covered with snow. And the sun says, I will take away the snow, and I will open the brooks, and I will unbind the chains of frost. And the earth says, But I am a

dead, cold earth; there is nothing in me. And the sun says, You are mistaken; all the harvests of the future are in you; all the glory of the spring is in you; all the possibilities of the orchard are in you, and I will bring them forth out of you. You are the sons of God, and all the harvesting and all the orchard fruit and all the spring glory of love and patience and forgiveness and enduring kindness—they are all in you, because you are the children of God, and all will be made manifest if God works in you and you work with God.—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*

March 6.

WE walk out into the mystery fearless because we trust in Thee. We face the great emergency with our hearts full of vital questions that cannot here be answered. We leave them all with Thee, knowing that Thou wilt cherish our wistful aspirations toward Him who loved and has redeemed us. We would know many things that Thou hast not revealed, but we can only love and trust and wait.
—*Madam Willard's Last Family Prayer.*

'TIS sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
Whose golden rounds are our calamities,
Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God
The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed.
—*James Russell Lowell.*

THERE is a legend of an artist who sought for a piece of sandalwood out of which to carve a Madonna. At last he was about to give up in

despair, leaving the vision of his life unrealized, when in a dream he was bidden to shape the figure from a block of oak wood, which was destined for the fire. Obeying the command, he produced from the log of common firewood a masterpiece. In like manner many people wait for great and brilliant opportunities for doing the good things, the beautiful things, of which they dream, while through all the plain, common days the very opportunities they require for such deeds lie close to them, in the simplest and most familiar passing events and in the homeliest circumstances. They wait to find sandalwood out of which to carve Madonnas, while far more lovely Madonnas than they dream of are hidden in the common logs of oak they burn in their open fireplace or spurn with their feet in the woodyard.—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

March 7.

WORRY hurts us more than work, and as Christians we have no right to be the victims of worry, anxious care, depression, and forebodings. We remember once hearing a speaker tell how in his youth he and a young companion became lost in the maze at Hampton Court; they wandered about, tired, discouraged, but they felt sure they would find their way out presently, and they thought it would seem foolish to ask direction, though they saw an old man working not far off. All their efforts, however, proved unavailing, and at last they came with red

faces to ask the old man if he could possibly tell them how to get out of the maze. "Why," he answered, "that's just what I am here for; why did you not say you wanted to get out before?" And he put them at once on the right track. Those young men learned that day not to rely so absolutely on their own wisdom and ability. There is One who stands ready to be our Counselor, our Guide, our Light in every labyrinth; instead of yielding to worry, let us simply ask Him to take us by the hand and lead us through.—*The Quiver.*

March 8.

THE soul alone, like a neglected harp,
Grows out of tune, and needs a hand divine;
Dwell Thou within it, tune and touch the chords,
Till every note and string shall answer Thine!

Abide in me! there have been moments pure
When I have seen Thy face and felt Thy power.
Then evil lost its grasp, and passion, hushed,
Owned the divine enchantment of the hour.

These were but seasons beautiful and rare;
Abide in me, and they shall ever be!
Fulfill at once Thy precept and my prayer,
Come and abide in me and I in Thee.

—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

THE pine is trained to need nothing and to endure everything. It is resolvedly whole, self-contained, desiring nothing but rightness, content with restricted completion. Tall or short, it will be straight. Small or large, it will be round. It may

be permitted to these soft lowland trees that they should make themselves gay with show of blossom and glad with pretty charities of fruitfulness. We builders with the sword have harder work to do for man, and must do it in close-set troops. To stay the sliding of the mountain snows, which would bury him; to hold in divided drops, at our sword points, the rain, which would sweep away him and his treasure fields; to nurse in shade among our brown fallen leaves the tricklings that feed the brooks in drought; to give massive shield against the winter wind, which shrieks through the bare branches of the plain—such service must we do Him steadfastly while we live. Our bodies, also, are at His service; softer than the bodies of other trees, though our toil is harder than theirs.—*John Ruskin.*

March 9.

THE common problem, yours, mine, everyone's,
Is, not to fancy what were fair in life,
Provided it could be, but finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means.

—*Robert Browning.*

WHILE you are counting the cost of building a noble and holy life never lose sight of the fact that Jesus Christ is a partner in your undertaking. "In Me is thy help;" "My grace is sufficient for thee." The closer you keep that partnership the stronger you are. He who has begun a good work in you and for you, "will perfect it until the day of Jesus

Christ." Finally, there is a crown at the end of the conflict.

"OUR knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And we shall be with Him."

—*Theodore Cuyler, D.D.*

I RECALL some particular experiences which seemed to be providential. I cannot explain how those events were timed for me so signally unless the finger of God set the hands together at the right time on my clock. Mechanism may account for the wheels of the clock and the hands, but the timing of these events, the setting of the hands to the true moment, implies higher thought and care. It tells me of God's providence, and this belief will be real to me as the life from which it has come.

—*Newman Smyth.*

March 10.

NOTHING that God has made is to be despised; least of all this body that now holds us. It has in it all the wonder and glory of creation, and is an epitome of all previous creations—a harp of more than a thousand strings; so strong that it can level mountains; so fine that in its automatic skill it almost thinks; so nearly spiritual that we cannot see where sense joins thought; so coarsely material that chemical law runs riot in it; a mere forge for the fire of oxygen, yet so delicate that it reflects in every turn and gesture the spirit and temper of the mind;

so one with us that if it is sound we can hardly fail of being happy, and if it is weak we can hardly fail of being miserable ; so one with us that we cannot think of ourselves as separate from it, yet are conscious that it is no part of us—such a thing as this is not to be despised or treated otherwise than as sacred. We have hardly any more imperative work than to secure for the body its highest possible vigor and health. How to feed and clothe and house it ; how to use it ; how to keep it safe from weakening and poisoning gases ; how to secure that rhythmic action of its functions that turns physical existence into music—this is the immediate question before civilization, the discussion of which will drive out much of the vice of society and revolutionize its systems of education. The gospel of the body is yet to be heard and heeded.—*Theodore T. Munger, D.D.*

March 11.

Not with the crowds who praise and pray,
With eyes upraised and body bent,
May earnest soul of thine to-day
Keep pure its sacramental Lent;

But follow Him from out the throng,
Where, soul secluded, hid from view,
He fought that battle fierce and long,
That only watching angels knew.

There linger till thy waiting heart,
By such drear conflict weak and spent,
Freed from its mortal, earthly part,
Shall with His spirit keep its Lent.

—*Henrietta Christian Wright.*

O LORD, who art our Guide even unto death, grant us, I pray Thee, grace to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest! In little daily duties to which Thou callest us, bow down our wills to simple obedience, patience under pain or provocation, strict truthfulness of word and manner, humility, kindness; in great acts of duty or perfection, if Thou shouldest call us to them, uplift us to self-sacrifice, heroic courage, laying down of life for Thy truth's sake, or for a brother. Amen!—*C. G. Rossetti.*

March 12.

IF there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do;
Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant;
Let me find in Thy employ
Peace, that dearer is than joy;
Out of self to love be led
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude.

—*J. G. Whittier.*

SOMETIMES, in passing through a crowd, we see a face that attracts us by its sweetness of expression. Perhaps it is an old face, crowned with gray hair, yet love, joy, and peace shine out of every dot and crinkle in it. But whether old or young, when we

see that unmistakable soul-light in a face, we know the heart behind it is pure, the life good. . . . To keep the mind occupied with good, pure, useful, and beautiful thoughts precludes the possibility of thinking about, and thus being tempted by, anything sinful, low, or gross. It is because Paul knew this that he says so earnestly, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report . . . think on these things." In the well-formed habit of thinking pure thoughts lies the secret of being pure in heart.

—*New York Observer.*

March 13.

FIND your niche, and fill it. If it be ever so little, if it is only to be hewer of wood or drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and truth.

—*Spurgeon.*

"AN', mind you, do think o' somethin' else beside the faults an' failin's. Look back an' see where you got the upper hand, an' be sure to praise the Lord for that. Tell the Lord all about that, too; 'tis music for Him so well as for us—how patience got the victory, an' love didn't fail us anywhere; an' how courage carried the day, an' watchfulness kept a sharp lookout. Mind you, bring that out, too, an' praise the Lord for it all. Why, I do count 'tis a dreadful robbery to come in the mornin' a-beggin' and prayin' for the help o' the Lord, an' then never

to have a word in the evenin' about the victories that His help have won. I can't understand it, I'm sure, but so 'tis. I really do believe that there's some people, an' sort o' religious people, too, who are more afraid o' thankin' God than they are o' sinnin' against Him. Anyhow, they're always tellin' the Lord o' their failin's, an' never speak a word o' their victories."—*Daniel Quorm.*

March 14.

SIDE by side are we still, though a shadow
Between us doth fall;
We are parted, and yet are not parted,
Not wholly and all.
For still you are round and about me,
Almost in my reach,
Though I miss the old pleasant communion
Of smile and of speech.
And I long to hear what you are seeing,
And what you have done,
Since the earth faded out from your vision,
And the heavens begun;
Since you dropped off the darkening fillet
Of clay from your sight,
And opened your eyes upon glory
Ineffably bright!
Though little my life has accomplished,
My poor hands have wrought,
I have lived what has seemed to be ages
In feeling and thought,
Since the time when our path grew so narrow,
So near the unknown,
That I turned back from following after,
And you went alone.

For we speak of you cheerfully, always,
As journeying on;
Not as one who is dead do we name you;
We say, you are gone.
For how could we speak of you sadly,
We, who watched while the grace
Of eternity's wonderful beauty
Grew over your face!
Do we call the star lost that is hidden
In the great light of morn?
Or fashion a shroud for the young child
In the day it is born?
Yet behold this were wise to their folly,
Who mourn, sore distressed,
When a soul, that is summoned, believing,
Enters into its rest!

—*Phœbe Cary.*

March 15.

DICTATE no terms to Providence. At whatever cost accept the service offered you, high or low, far or near. Then burn to the socket.

—*R. D. Hitchcock, D.D.*

THE Bible nowhere promises us exemption from trials. It does not assure us that we shall not go into the furnace, nor into the deep waters; but it does promise that the fire shall not consume us and the waters shall not overflow us. In the midst of the trial it shall still be well with us. By our side in the furnace there shall be One who is like the Son of God, and we shall come out without even the smell of fire on our garments. It is not said that Christians shall not have extraordinary trials. Christianity develops manhood; it vastly enlarges

the sphere of life. It gives a broader surface across which the winds of adversity may sweep. It gives greater possibilities of enjoyment; and these make greater trials certain. A Christian man is higher, and deeper, and broader than other men are. He is more fully developed in all his capacities both for joy and sorrow. . . . Stoical indifference to pain is an evidence of a coarse and brutal nature. To feel, and yet to do and dare, is to be truly noble.

—*R. S. MacArthur, D.D.*

March 16.

WHAT shall I offer Thee in Lenten days
For sacrifice? how mourn with Thee, my Lord,
Who didst receive for all Thy love a sword,
And kisses of betrayal for love's praise?
It may well be grief shown in outward ways.
Coarse Lenten fare, a sad face, doth accord
With this sad season of Thy passion, Lord,
But O! Thou drink'st anew in these last days
The bitter cup. No little weeping child
Groping 'neath rich men's tables for a crumb,
No tired, despairing toiler, sorrow wild,
But is Thine own. To give, until Thou come,
A hand to these, this be the time's employ,
Bringing to true disciples Easter joy.

—*Mrs. M. F. Butts.*

A WEALTHY gentleman employed a workman to erect upon a lot in the cemetery a costly monument. After the stone had been erected, and the finishing touches put on the carving, the proud workman sent for the owner to come and inspect the work. With a smile of satisfaction the artist pointed to the

monument. The owner glanced at it a moment and turned away, saying, "You have left out one letter, which renders all the labor and anxiety you have spent on it worthless to me, and I cannot accept your work." And so, in carving the monument of our Christian characters, one pet sin may render the whole structure worthless and cause it to crumble to dust. "All these things" we may have "kept from our youth up, yet one thing," a very necessary thing, "thou yet lackest." We need to be wholly purified and "cleansed from our secret faults."—*C. W. Bibb.*

March 17.

THE hammer of Thy discipline, O Lord,
Strikes fast and hard! Life's anvil rings again
To Thy strong strokes. And yet we know 'tis then
That from the heart's hot iron, all abroad
The rich glow spreads. Great Fashioner Divine—
Who sparest not, in Thy far-seeing plan,
The blows that shape the character of man,
Or fire that makes him yield to touch of Thine—
Strike on, if so Thou wilt! For Thou alone
Canst rightly test the temper of our will,
Or tell how these base metals may fulfill
Thy purpose—making all our life Thine own.
Only, we do beseech Thee—let the pain
Of fiery ordeals through which we go
Shed all around us such a warmth and glow,
Such cheerful show'rs of sparks in golden rain,
That hard hearts may be melted, cold hearts fired,
And callous hearts be taught to feel and see
That discipline is more to be desired
Than all the ease that keeps us back from Thee.

—*Mary E. Roper.*

THE teachers in God's great school are many. Joy and sorrow, love and loss, daily work, household tenderness, health, sickness, strength, helplessness—one by one they come, solemn figures, some with radiant faces, some veiled and shrouded. Each speaks its word of command: "Be glad," "Be patient," "Be faithful," "Strive," "Lie still and wait." Often we break in upon the lesson with an importunate demand, "Show me the end!" But each teacher, grave and tender, says only, "Do this that I bid thee." The full answer may be a long time in coming. And yet all the time God is so near! For the present want we may always find Him sufficient. . . . Go forth to work, to serve, to love! This little life passes quickly away. Its shadows and sorrows are for a moment; its virtues, its victory, its peace, are of the eternal.

—*George S. Merriam.*

March 18.

IT'S good to put a bother away over night. It all straightens out in the morning.—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

WE have only once to live; therefore let us live to some purpose. The day that dawned this morning will never dawn again. The opportunities which it brought with it will never come again; and if we fail to fill it with the service it requires of us there will be no possibility of returning into it to repair the mischief. The wheels of Time's chariot have ratchets to them, and they move only forward.

—*William M. Taylor, D.D.*

March 19.

THE fire that every hope consumes,
Either the inmost soul entombs
Or evermore the face illumes.

—*E. C. Stedman.*

THE old Mohammedan soldiers had the idea that they never could die until their time came—that they would die just as soon in the bosom of their families as in the army. What heroes this belief made of them! How fearless! how daring! how unconquerable, as their hosts marched onward! All the difference, they believed, was, that if they died at home they died cowards and traitors, while if they died in the army they died as saints and as martyrs, and went direct to a world of bliss. O, if, as Christians, we feel the full force of the thought that God watches over us, and whether we live or die all is well—that a few days earlier or later make no difference; that we are destined for heaven, working while God lets us work, and rejoicing when God gives us to rejoice, how irresistible will be this power, and how happy shall we be!—*Bishop Simpson.*

March 20.

THE more God empties your hands for other work the more you may know He has special work to give them.—*Edmund Garrett.*

IF Job could have known—as he sat there in the ashes, bruising his heart on this problem of Providence—that in the trouble that had come upon him he was doing what one man may do to work out the

problem for the world, he might again have taken courage. No man lives to himself. Job's life is but your life and mine written in larger text. . . . So, then, though we may not know what trials wait on any of us, we can believe that, as the days in which Job wrestled with his dark maladies are the only days that make him worth remembrance, and but for which his name had never been written in the book of life, so the days through which we struggle, finding no way, but never losing the light, will be the most significant we are called to live.

—*Robert Collyer.*

March 21.

HERE I must pause—the roads diverge,
And one, I know, is mine;
Impatient heart, be still, nor urge
Thy heat, thy haste; my Father's will
Is that I wait. Lord, take my will in Thine!

Lights beckon o'er one road, and one
Grows chill, and dark, and dim;
Joy for the heart, glad work begun,
Hope, promise, blessing, gild the one,
And one is cold—O heart, trust thou in Him!

I may not choose—Thine are the ways—
All ways lead up to Thee;
If sun or shade lie on my days,
I need not ask; be Thou my sun,
And light my soul, till I Thy candle be.

What though I burn? Thine is the flame,
Thine is the air that feeds;
Soul of my soul, thrice sacred name,
Where'er I go, where'er I stay,
Through life, through death, Thine be the hand
that leads! —*Mrs. D. H. R. Goodale.*

March 22.

ICE breaks many a branch, and so I see a great many persons bowed down and crushed by their afflictions. But now and then I meet one that sings in affliction, and then I thank God for my own sake as well as his. There is no such sweet singing as a song in the night. You recollect the story of the woman who, when her only child died, in rapture looked up, as with the face of an angel, and said, "I give you joy, my darling." That single sentence has gone with me years and years down through my life, quickening and comforting me.

—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

A THOUSAND times more good than I deserve,
God gives me every day. —*Celia Thaxter.*

THE kingdom of God has no place in the geographies. The kingdom of God is in the hearts of men. You know how they used to ask Christ in the old days, over and over, when the kingdom of God should come. But He set no date. For the kingdom of God, the millennium, the reign of righteousness, begins whenever and wherever any man or woman stops uttering unkind judgments and uncalled-for condemnations, and begins with a new earnestness to give and to forgive. And the kingdom of God will fully come, and earth will be given another name and be christened heaven on the very day when all the men and all the women who live upon it shall have learned that lesson of eternal love.—*Rev. George Hodges.*

March 23.

HOPEFUL seemed to think if he had been in Little-faith's place he would not have given up so easily ; but Christian bade him beware of self-confidence, for it was a very different thing to hear of those villains who attacked Little-faith, and to be attacked by them oneself. No man could tell the wonderful fearfulness of that combat but he who has been in it. Great-grace himself, by whose coming up the desperate rogues were frightened away from Little-faith, though excellent good at his weapons, would very likely get a fall, if Guilt, Faint-heart, and Mistrust got within him, not being kept at his sword's point; and when a man is down, and three such wretches upon him, what can he do? There is no help, trust, strength, or safety for us but in Christ, in His great grace in us, upon us, and for us. Great-grace must be our champion, as he was Little-faith's, or it is all over with us.

—Rev. George B. Cheever.

"As one who entereth by night a room
Where sufferers lie,
Shadeth his lamp to suit the languid eye,
So doth the Christ draw nigh
Unto our world of gloom.
The light of life He beareth, and doth stand
Shading it tenderly with pierced hand,
Lest the full glare
Should cause us not to see, but stare.
Yet through the nail prints some sweet rays divine
Will gently shine—
Dawn which doth for the day prepare."

March 24.

THE steamship *Cambridge*, going from Boston to Bangor, off the Maine coast struck a rock that was not laid down upon any chart. The captain was not to blame. At once a bell buoy was placed over the ledge. Every wave as it now rises and falls rings out an alarm of danger to the passing sailor. Faithless the captain who in still fog or furious storm should again wreck his ship on that rock. As one sails over the sea of his seventy years he may strike some rock of evil which no former navigator has known or marked; but if you do, then never twice should you there go to pieces. Certain states of feeling one may not at first know are perilous; but when he finds that these feelings are warming his heart with the flames of hell he should at once put them forever out. Temptations flow in the blood, breathe in the lung, throb in the pulse. "To thine own self be true, and thou canst not be false to any man," is as good ethics as it is good logic. One has no need of trying to know the world; he will know too much without trying. You do not need to be sick in order to enjoy health. You do not need to go out to find temptation, for temptation will come into you all you can stand up against. Our prayer indeed is to be that we may not even enter into temptation. This prayer should be as constant and as earnest as the prayer that we may be delivered from evil.—*Rev. Charles F. Thwing.*

HIS hidden meaning lies in our endeavors.—*Fletcher.*

March 25.

"THEY bear it well!" we say of those
Who stand alone in storm and stress.
Unmoved they seem, but each heart knows
Its bitterness.

"She hath forgot!" we say of one
Whose heart beat faithful to our own;
Yet who with memory hath done?
The dead alone.

The saddest words that lips can say
Are those we utter not at all;
And our most bitter tears are they
That must not fall. —*Anon.*

IF one should give me a dish of sand, and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how would it draw to itself the most invisible particles, by the mere power of attraction! The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessings; only the iron in God's sand is gold.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

March 26.

BE not too busy, O thou earnest heart,
To hear what friends are saying at thy side;
To know if cares or joys with them abide,
And for their help or cheer to do thy part;
To hear the "music of humanity,"
To feel thyself one of God's family.

Be not too busy, dreamer, with thy dreaming,
To see the world about thee, for it bears
God's thought within, His wisdom it declares;
To see its woods, its hills, its waters gleaming;
To watch the sunset clouds, the "green things growing,"
To hear the birds, the brooks, the wild winds blowing.

Be not too busy with thy work and care
To look to God, to clasp thy hand in His;
Miss thou all else, but fail thou not of this;
Thou need'st not all alone thy burdens bear;
Listen and wait, obey and learn His will,
His love and service all thy life shall fill.

—*Olive E. Dana.*

March 27.

THERE is a noble economy of the deepest life. There is a watchful reserve which keeps guard over the powers of profound anxiety and devoted work, and refuses to give them away to any first applicant who comes and asks. Wealth rolls up to the door and says, "Give me your great anxiety;" and you look up and answer, "No, not for you; here is a little half-indifferent desire which is all that you deserve." Popularity comes and says, "Work with all your might for me;" and you reply, "No; you are not of consequence enough for that. Here is a small fragment of energy which you may have, if you want it; but that is all." Even Knowledge comes and says, "Give your whole soul to me;" and you must answer once more, "No; great, good, beautiful as you are, you are not worthy of a man's whole soul. There is something in a man so sacred and

so precious that he must keep it in reserve till something even greater than the desire of knowledge demands it." But then at last comes One far more majestic than them all—God comes with His supreme demand for goodness and for character, and then you open the doors of your whole nature and bid your holiest and profoundest devotion to come trooping forth. Now you rejoice that you kept something which you would not give to any lesser lord. Now here is the deep in life which can call to the deep in you and find its answer.

—Phillips Brooks.

March 28.

THERE walked of old along the starlit mazes
Of heavenward paths a soul that longed for day,
Distraught with doubt, as one that upward gazes,
Inquiring oft, "How can we know the way?"
Lo! full upon his feet there fell the splendor
Of heaven's own light, the glorious light of day,
As on his ear attent, in accents tender
The sweet assurance fell, "I am the Way."

. . . . . .

"Who followeth Me shall walk in darkness never,
The light of life shall brighten all his way,
Nor things of time nor things to come shall sever
From Him they love, the children of the day."

—P. S. Boyd.

How beautiful it would be to live in a world where every being we met unconsciously revealed in look and word and action, in the slightest gesture and movement, the divine intention in his creation! It is because little children do so, for the first brief

months of their lives, that they charm us and captivate us. And it is in the simplicity of being without dissimulation, and from the depths of our souls, just what we were meant to be, that we become as little children, and with them enter into the kingdom of heaven. The world seems to force us to put on masks and veils—to hide what is most real in us behind some conventional caricature of ourselves. But both life and death strive with us, compelling us to show, if only by glimpses, what we truly are, as the children of God, and mirrors of His holy nature.—*Lucy Larcom.*

March 29.

LET the smallest fragment be wanting from the Florentine mosaic, no matter how misshapen and unattractive in itself is the bit of stone or marble, and the design, fair enough in its completeness to adorn a palace and delight a king, is marred, and the beautiful and costly mosaic has lost its charm and worth. So the pattern of our life is disfigured and dishonored when any duty or work that God has planned to have part in our perfection has been left undone or unworthily performed. You know, perhaps, the legend told by Robert Browning in his poem of "The Boy and the Angel." The boy working at his trade, and thus praising God with his faithful work and life, wins the heart of the angel, who helps the boy to realize his desire to praise God, as he imagines, in an ampler, finer way,

even as a pope. That the boy's work as he becomes priest and pope may not be left undone, the angel takes the boy's place at the bench. But it is only to learn, in time, that not even an angel can fill the boy's place and give God the praise of the boy's faithful work. And so there came to Rome another pope; and the boy went back to his bench to give the praise without which heaven's music was not complete and God's great plan not fulfilled.

—*Henry Allyn Frink, Ph.D.*

March 30.

I FIND the doing of the will of God leaves no time for disputing about His plans.—*George Macdonald.*

HE who has to do with a lie stakes his soul, and loses in any case. Character pure and noble chimes in with the eternal harmonies; but falsehood is a hideous clangor, now and forever. What any life, however humble, can do, is a secret with God; it may widen its influence through ages, or it may leave a trace seen only by Him. But if valiantly, earnestly, nobly lived, by the light of God's truth and laws, it is holy forever. The city of God slowly rises through the ages, and every true life is a living stone in some of its palaces. You were made for God from eternity, and no lie is of Him, be it in trade or profession, in act or in word. Insincerities are marks on the devil's tally, and so are all hypocrisies and shams. Let your character be real, the shining warp and woof of each day

working out the part God has set you in the great loom of Time.—*Cunningham Geikie, D.D.*

March 31.

WHAT joy to take His guiding hand,
To trust, if not to understand,
To rest through change and toil and tears
On Him, whose grand eternal years
In ever-living youth are new,
And cry, "He leads me hitherto."

Though days to come may often be
With burdens crowded full for me;
Though hope deferred may cast a shade
Across my spirit; undismayed
I'll meet them, one by one, for through
Such days He brought me hitherto.

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

BLESSED is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows, draining off the sour, festering water gradually from the root of the remotest grass blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green, fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream—how blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and its value be great or small! . . . All true work is sacred; in all true work, were it but true hand-labor, there is something of divineness. Labor, wide as the earth, has its summit in heaven.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

April.

✠

SWEET April! many a thought
Is wedded unto thee, as hearts are wed.

—*Longfellow.*

THE wild and windy March once more
Has shut its gates of sleet,
And given us back the April time,
So fickle and so sweet.

Now blighting with our fears, our hopes—
Now kindling hopes with fears;
Now softly weeping through her smiles—
Now smiling through her tears.

. . . . . .

I welcome thee with all my heart,
Glad herald of the spring,
And yet I cannot choose but think
Of all thou dost not bring.

Thou set'st the red familiar rose
Beside the household door,
But O, the friends, the sweet, sweet friends,
Thou bringest back no more!

But shall I mourn that thou no more
A short-lived joy can bring,
Since death has lifted up the gates
Of their eternal spring?

—*Alice Cary.*

FOURTH MONTH.

HOW wondrously beautiful it is, that in each opening spring, when all things are waking into new life, we take into our hearts afresh the blessed fact of our Lord's resurrection! Death is stripped of its terrors; the grave is illumined with light. Because He lives we shall live also. Ah, into how many of our homes hath the death angel entered since one short year ago —Death, with his unrelenting face, his unhearing ears, his sealed lips! So many of us have gone close to the "valley of shadows" with our loved ones and left them there—we to turn back to the earth life, desolate, burdened, heartbroken; they to step into the heaven life, where there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. Surely, we cannot grieve for *them;* it is for ourselves we mourn, forgetting, mayhap, in our selfish sorrow that "it is well" with our beloved in that better country. But as the blessed Eastertide once more draws near, let us lift up our tear-blurred eyes to the One who hath brought life and immortality to us all, and ask Him to fill our empty hands with work for Him.

May this Easter be full of blessing and comfort unutterable to all whose hearts are bereaved! The still form, the sepulcher—these are of the earth. "He is not here, He is risen," is as true to-day of *our* precious dead as of Him whom Mary and the disciples mourned so hopelessly, but who broke the bonds of the grave, and flung wide the doors of the great prison house to show us that the abode of the dead is really a place of light and life and joy.

April 1.

LISTEN! The earliest bluebird sings again
His prophecy of spring above the snows;
And in our heart already summer glows.

So the first violet in a sunny nook,
Lifting its face in April's frosty hours,
Tells of the coming sisterhood of flowers.

And when the Easter bells from tower to tower
Proclaim Christ risen, still our faith replies,
"Since He is risen, we shall also rise."

The winter of our sorrow passes by;
The springtime of our hope is drawing near.
Listen! His message in the bells is clear.

—Rev. Isaac O. Rankin.

I WAS walking one day in the early spring along the country road. Just over the stone fence yonder there was a broad field, smooth as a floor, and most exquisitely arrayed in the fresh spring greenness of its grass. It seemed to me my eyes had rarely fallen on a sight so lovely. But ripping right through that smooth and pleasant greenness there was being dragged a plow, and the fresh beauty of the fair sward was being turned under from the sun and air, and only the ugly brown soil was being turned outward, and all the fair and radiant scene was being changed and scarred. "Why?" I asked myself. I do not have to wait long for an answer. The "chastisement" of the fair field was in order that the autumn might find it golden with the more precious harvest of the wheat. Well, God's plowshare cuts, but never for the simple sake of cutting;

always for the results of character—fairer, sweeter, nobler. There is benign design behind our chastisement.—*Anon.*

April 2.

GOD does not send us strange flowers every year;
When the spring winds blow o'er the pleasant places,
The same dear things lift up the same fair faces—
The violet is here.

It all comes back—the odor, grace, and hue,
Each sweet relation of its life repeated;
Nothing is lost, no looking for is cheated;
It is the thing we knew.

So after the death-winter it will be;
God will not put strange sights in heavenly places;
The old love will look out from the old faces;
Veilchen, I shall have thee.

—*A. D. T. Whitney.*

How slowly rises the spiritual temple which every one of us is concerned in building! Years ago, in conversion, the altar was set up, and the initial stones laid upon the sure Foundation, with an enthusiasm which, as in the case of the builders of the second temple, promised a speedy and splendid structure. But how many obstacles have been suffered to thwart that promise! How very often the work has lagged, or even come to a standstill! How easy it is to grow weary in welldoing! On the other hand, what need have we to be encouraged to renew the labor zealously, and build ourselves up in the most holy faith, and finish, day by day, the work which the great Architect has given us to do!

—*Rev. Wesley O. Holway, U. S. N.*

April 3.

AND having strewn the violets, reap the corn,
And having reaped and garnered, bring the plow
And draw new furrows 'neath the healthy morn,
And plant the great Hereafter in this Now.

—Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

SUPPOSE it does rain, and that it is a gloomy day, is this a reason why you should be sad and depressed? Have you not the means within your bosom to make you happy? Have you no thought of thankfulness to your Maker for His past goodness?—for the sun that shone yesterday? —for the friends that surrounded you and made your house a retreat of pleasure? Now, just because a few clouds fill the sky, you are depressed. Shame on you! A true man will always be cheerful and strive to make others so, no matter how dark it may be above or dreary below. Never again, we pray you, murmur at the weather, or cease to look up with joy, notwithstanding your surroundings.

—Religious Herald.

April 4.

O, I AM so sure we have never fully comprehended all that is coming back to us! I wonder how the angels can endure our lack of faith. We do not act so in regard to the spring; we know it will come back, and we say to the March winds, "Blow on; your time is short! April and May are coming." But, alas! we do not act that way about the winter of the heart. We put on our mourning, and we look and act as if it were all gone forever;

when, instead of that, it is all coming back, and the voices of nature, and the look of nature, all say, Resurrection! Resurrection! We do not heed. Our eyes are too dim with weeping; we have been so accustomed to looking down instead of looking up, that we do not see God's face or hear His voice in nature all around us. Now, this month, with the beautiful Easter in it, calls for hope; and will you not leave your tombs of sorrow and come forth to life and usefulness? We must leave our graves and graveclothes, and let others say of us in our measure, "She is risen! She is alive; a new creature!"—*Mrs. Margaret Bottome.*

THE Lord is risen indeed;
He is here for your love, for your need—
Not in the grave nor the sky,
But here where men live and die;
And true the word that was said,
"Why seek ye the living among the dead?"
—*Richard Watson Gilder.*

April 5.

Do you remember that old story of a young man with bent head standing on the border of a vast piece of ground which he had to cultivate, discouraged and murmuring, "I can never do it; it is too large?" "My son," said his father, "you have not all this field to plow. Do you see this little corner marked by a slight ridge? That is all your task of to-day; only occupy yourself with that."
—*Anon.*

HAVE faith in a third-day morning,
In a resurrection hour;
For what ye sow in weakness,
He can raise again in power.

Have faith in the Lord of that thorny crown,
In the Lord of the pierced hand;
For He reigneth now o'er earth and heaven,
And His power who may withstand?

And the hopes that never on earth shall bloom,
The sorrows forever new,
Lay silently down at the feet of Him
Who died and is risen for you.

—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

April 6.

ONCE I visited a friend who was devoted to the microscope. He handed me a thin slide of French glass, prepared for the instrument. As I held it between my eyes and the sunlight it appeared translucent as crystal, perfectly spotless. Then the operator placed it under a lens of five hundred magnifying power. Lo! in its center appeared a perfect cluster of tiny spiral shells, such as one may gather on the seashore. They were absolutely invisible to the naked eye. What the eye could not reveal to the soul that soul could see through a more powerful instrument aiding the vision. The soul is ever greater than the sight. It has capacities of vision unmeasured, yet partially revealed through telescope and other magnifying mediums. The senses are only bull's-eye windows through which the prisoner looks forth, over a narrow range to a

near horizon, from his scanty cell. But when this prisoner shall once escape, and shall exert his powers unrestricted by bodily senses, without hampering limitations, how vastly may not his powers then expand! That the spirit shall one day burst this prison gate and attain the use of its repressed powers is a part of the Easter instinct in our breasts that ever protests against the possibility of oblivion.—*Dr. A. Taylor.*

April 7.

THE sky was gray with clouds of unshed rain;
Some crooned in minor key, "Alack-a-day
For us; our life is also tinted gray."
Sad souls cried out, "The world holds only pain."

We went into the wood, and there we found
Dear blue-eyed blossoms scattered here and there.
Each with its lot content, no matter where;
Naught cared if lowly head scarce cleared the ground!

Those lovely blooms taught us a lesson clear;
For others now we'll smile, and gladly share
Our joys with those whose griefs far greater bear;
If dark *our* lot, we may bring others cheer!

—*Keziah Shelton.*

ONLY owls and bats seek the shadows and live within them. Only cowards and the faint-hearted call the world a vale of tears. Because there is nightshade in the world, shall we plant it in our gardens? Because bats live, shall we cage them and hang them in our bedrooms? Because it sometimes rains, shall we carry umbrellas in sunny weather? Because sin and sorrow, unfaith and

death are abroad in the world, is there any reason why we should stand at our doors in expectancy of their coming, or weep constantly at the windows to see the sad procession go by? . . .

There is no grief that will bear a lifetime's mourning. Only the faithless cry always. As though to prove the wisdom of my words, just here, as I write, the miracle of sunshine and rain together is weaving out of doors. It has been storming like the wildest fall of passionate tears, but now a rosy tide of sunset floods the dripping world, and the wet streets dimple and flash like tearful faces smiling. A moment, and the sun has gained the victory. Hurrah for sunny weather then, and banished be the tears!—*Amber.*

April 8.

GIVE us part, O Friend divine,
In this death, this life of Thine!
Save us from our selfishness!
Make us strong, Thy world to bless!

By Thy resurrection-light
Lead us onward through the night!
In the dawn we dimly see,
Give us joyful work for Thee!

Day-star, in our hearts arisen,
Enter every spirit's prison!
O, make every soul a ray
Of Thy new, triumphant day! —*Anon.*

IN the midst of constant decay and death have your feet fixed on the Rock that crumbles not—the Rock of Ages past and to come—on the Rock

Christ Jesus. Then can you rejoice that, though death may seize upon your body as his rightful prey, after that he hath no more that he can do. The soul is safe. It shall pass into the unchanging yet ever-changing society of heaven. There the laws are perfect, friendship and love enduring, the faces of dear ones never grow pale and cold and resolve to dreadful dust, the funeral bell and train cast no gloom over happy homes. The cemetery, awful with all its greenness, borders not the river of the water of life. There is no Greenwood or Mount Auburn necessary for the New Jerusalem. The present old, sinful one is surrounded with graves—how emblematic of man !—the new with life. The death of Christ has accomplished this. The resurrection secured it. Let us on this glad day put our whole trust in that mighty Redeemer.

—Bishop Gilbert Haven.

April 9.

OUT in the highways, wherever we go,
Seed we must gather, and seed we must sow;
Even the tiniest seed has a power,
Be it a thistle or be it a flower.

Out of each moment some good we obtain,
Something to winnow and scatter again;
All that we listen to, all that we read,
All that we think of, is gathering seed.

Gathering seed, we must scatter as well;
God will watch over the place where it fell.
Only the gain of the harvest is ours;
Shall we plant thistles, or shall we plant flowers?

—Josephine Pollard.

A FEW ladies once met in Dublin to read the Scriptures and converse together. One lady said that the fullers' soap and the refiner of silver were only the same image intended to convey the same view of the sanctifying influences of the grace of Christ. "No," said another, "they are not just the same image; there is something remarkable in the expression in this verse: 'He shall *sit*,'" etc. All thought it possibly might be so. This lady was to call upon a silversmith, and report to them what he said on the subject. She went, without telling the object of her visit, and begged to know the process of refining, which he fully described to her. "But do you sit while you are refining?" asked she. "O yes, madam; I must sit with my eyes steadily fixed on the furnace, since if the silver remain too long it is sure to be injured," said he. "And how do you know when it is sufficiently refined?" "Whenever I see my own image reflected in it, I know that the process is completed." She at once saw the beauty and comfort of the expression.—*Whitecross.*

April 10.

The Grain of Wheat.—O Sower, why dost thou forsake me? Escaped from the hoarfrosts of winter and the storms of summer, how greatly did I suffer when thou didst pluck me from the ripened ear; when thou didst confine me within the depths of the dark granary! Thou lovest me then no longer? Alas! I had hoped to nourish thee one

day, that is, to become flesh of thy body, and blood of thy veins. O Sower, why dost thou abandon me?

The Sower.—I do not abandon thee; I but leave thee for a space. Soon we shall meet again—thou multiplied, I grateful. Fructify. Wait. Complain not. Do thy work. Thou must needs be harvested, and I must harvest thee.

The Man.—Sower of beings, why hast Thou cast me away upon the earth, naked and alone? Day, night, winter, summer, I suffer. Dost Thou know that I am unhappy after nothingness, before heaven? Why hast Thou cast me away upon the earth, naked and alone, O Sower of beings?

God.—I have not cast thee away; I have confided thee to fecundating soil. Grow and prosper. At the time of the harvest I shall gather thee, and thou shalt be served in thy fragrance upon the table of the father of the family. I have not cast thee away.—*Joseph Roux.*

April 11.

O HEART of mine, we shouldn't
Worry so!
What we've missed of calm we couldn't
Have, you know!
What we've met of stormy pain,
And of sorrow's driving rain,
We can better meet again
If it blow.

We have erred in that dark hour
We have known.
When the tears fell with the shower
All alone—

Were not shine and shower blent
As the gracious Master meant?
Let us temper our content
With His own.

For we know not every sorrow
Can be sad;
So, forgetting all the sorrow
We have had,
Let us fold away our fears
And put by our foolish tears,
And through all the coming years
Just be glad.

—*James Whitcomb Riley.*

April 12.

HE that loveth little, prayeth little; he that loveth much, prayeth much.—*Saint Augustine.*

VERY beautiful, is it not?—the picture of the opening springtime which we gather from our Bible, catching here a glimpse and there a glimpse as it lies reflected in the song of psalmist and prophet, and of Jesus, who had so often watched it as a boy on hills of Galilee. Doubtless He used to go out to gather early lilies, and note the green garments of the fresh young grass. Ten million million tiny strugglers on our hills and in our fields to-day are trying to show us that ours, too, is holy land. The flowers have begun to greet us in our walks—dumb angels, with faces all ashine with the glad tidings that the Saviour-season hath arisen. Thank God for the resurrection thoughts which the spring months bring to us! We die to live again. We die *that we may* live again. Nothing is quickened save it die. Mor-

tality is the condition of immortality. What echoes we have wakened of this truth! The opening spring prints it off on every hillside in illuminated text of leaf and flower. We find, as always with these central facts of nature, that the best and highest meaning of the truth belongs to ourselves—so completely is man a part of all, so completely is all represented in man. Our word "resurrection" seems to concentrate the history of the universe, to whisper the secret of the life of God.

—*Rev. W. C. Gannett.*

April 13.

GOD keeps a school for His children here on earth; and one of His best teachers is named Disappointment. He is a rough teacher, severe in tone and harsh in his handling sometimes, but his tuition is worth all it costs. Many of our best lessons through life have been taught us by that same stern old schoolmaster, Disappointment.—*Cuyler.*

I HAVE heard that in the deserts, when the caravans are in want of water, they are accustomed to send on a camel with its rider some distance in advance; then, after a little space, follows another; and then, at a short interval, another. As soon as the first man finds water, almost before he stoops down to drink, he shouts aloud, "Come!" The next, hearing his voice, repeats the word, "Come!" until the whole wilderness echoes with the word, "Come!" So in that verse of the Scripture, the Spirit and the

bride say, first of all, "Come;" and let him that heareth say, "Come;" and whosoever is athirst, let him take of the water of life freely.—*Spurgeon.*

April 14.

O SAD-FACED mourners, who each day are wending
Through churchyard paths of cypress and of yew,
Leave for to-day the low graves you are tending,
And lift your eyes to God's eternal blue!

It is no time for bitterness or sadness;
Twine Easter lilies, not pale asphodels;
Let your souls thrill to the caress of gladness,
And answer the sweet chime of Easter bells.

If Christ were still within the grave's low prison,
A captive of the enemy we dread;
If from that moldering cell He had not risen,
Who then could chide the gloomy tears you shed?

If Christ were dead there would be need to sorrow,
But He has risen and vanquished death for aye;
Hush, then, your sighs, if only till the morrow,
At Easter give your grief a holiday.

—*May Riley Smith.*

A PERFECT life is not attained in a day. Men cannot cut 'cross lots, or take an air line for the kingdom of heaven. If we had our way, we should have the bud, the blossom, and the ripened fruit at the same time. But this is not God's method. He gives us "first the blade, then the ear, afterward the full corn in the ear." Character is a growth, and it requires time to perfect the full-rounded Christian.—*D. C. Tomlinson.*

April 15.

RING, happy bells of Easter time!
The world takes up your chant sublime,
"The Lord is risen!" The night of fear
Has passed away, and heaven draws near:
We breathe the air of that blest clime,
At Easter time.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

WE do not know what are the occupations of heaven; but this we know, those who have gone there are "satisfied;" and we cannot conceive of those who were so busy here about their Master's work being satisfied in idleness. Hence we believe that there, as here, He finds work for them to do—work congenial, satisfying—and, freed from the limitation of the earthly body, they can pursue it joyously, "without weariness and without rest."

The sorrow, the loneliness of homes from which loved ones have passed into the skies, is hard to bear; our human hearts hunger for the "touch of the vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." If to this be added the feeling that they are *lost* to us, never to be restored, we are crushed by the weight of woe; but it is a weight our tender Father never meant us to bear. Christ came to bring life and immortality to light; to make us *know*—not conjecture—that there is everlasting life. Let no tear-dimmed eyes be shut against this blessed truth, let no heart sorrow as without hope of blessed reunions in our Father's house from which we shall go no more out forever.—*Mary Lowe Dickinson.*

April 16.

CLOUDLET, sailing o'er the sky,
Thou art nearer God than I;
Tell me, canst thou feel Him nigh?

Mountain, with thy forehead white
Ever lifted day and night,
Speak! What voices fill the height?

Star, O star, with holy face,
Shining in the highest place,
Canst not thou God's presence trace?

Star and cloud and mountain dumb—
Is not God revealed to some?
Yea, whene'er the heart says, "Come!"

—*James Buckham.*

I PLUCK an acorn from the greensward, and hold it to my ear; and this is what it says to me: "By and by the birds will come and nest in me. By and by I will furnish shade for the cattle. By and by I will provide warmth for the home in the pleasant fire. By and by I will be shelter from the storm to those who have gone under the roof. By and by I will be the strong ribs of the great vessel, and the tempest will beat against me in vain while I carry men across the Atlantic." "O foolish little acorn, wilt thou be all this?" I ask. And the acorn answers, "Yes; God and I."—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*

April 17.

CHEERFULNESS is just as natural to the heart of a man in strong health as color to his cheek; and wherever there is habitual gloom there must be

either bad air, unwholesome food, improperly severe labor, or erring habits of life.—*Ruskin.*

We live together between the solemn heaven and the solemn earth. The hand which planted us and the soil in which we are planted—both of them are real, neither of them can be forgotten. God help us to be true to both! God help us to stand in the world with natures opened upward to receive the divinest gifts, with natures opened outward to catch every humblest opportunity which life affords. What were we if we had not come from God? What were we if we had not come into the world? O, by the God we came from and by the world into which we have come, let us be men! And to be men is to be images of Christ, the Tree of Life. It is to have the psalmist's blessing, to be trees planted by the waterside which shall bring forth their fruit in due season. May that blessing come to all of us!

—*Phillips Brooks.*

April 18.

Jesus endured the cross—a heavier cross than we have to bear. Jesus despised the shame—greater shame than ever can be heaped on us; ran the race, and He is crowned on the throne of God. He knows how to help us when we are weak. Poor, feeble, trembling racer in the course, is your strength almost gone? Look unto Jesus and whisper, "More strength," and you will be able to take another step. Struggler in the contest, are your muscles

wearied, and are you giving out? Look unto Jesus and whisper, "A little more power," and it shall be yours. When temptation rushes upon you, and you are almost overborne, look unto Jesus.

"He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He hath felt the same,"

and He knows just what to do for you to bring you off conqueror. And all along the length of the race, whether it be on a plain or in a valley, whether it be up or whether it be down, whether it be alone or in the crowd, whether sick or well, whether at home or abroad—wherever you are, look unto Jesus, and the needed help you will have.

—Bishop Simpson.

April 19.

How much suffering is dimly hinted in the one intimation that He bare our sicknesses! How much may be hidden under the supposition of the Jews that He was nearly fifty years of age, when so little beyond thirty! How sharp must have been the experiences which graved such lines upon the visage so marred more than any man! Think of all that must have gone on under the surface of His home life, where neither did His brethren believe in Him! Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself! Think what temptation must have been to the Holy One, and what the concentration of malice and great rage when the Prince of Darkness went forth to do his

worst against the lonely Son of man, whom he knew to be the Son of God! Think of Jesus *alone* with Satan! O, what things He suffered *before* He came to the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, which filled up the cup which His Father gave Him to drink for us men and for our salvation!—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

April 20.

ONLY to touch once more the "vanished hand."
Only once more the silenced voice to hear,
Only to know the hovering shade is near.
Though the blank veil no man can understand
Falls between us and the mysterious land
Where they are dwelling whom we hold so dear,
Our granted prayer would crush the doubt, the fear,
That twines in sorrow's cord the bitterest strand;
So, from the vigil of the sheeted dead,
So, from the grave with all its tended flowers,
The wailings from the hearts uncomforted
Go up to heaven through all life's lonely hours.
As soft as dew the answer from above:
"For thee I lived, I died, whose name is Love."
—*All the Year Round.*

O SORROWING hearts, sit not down in the gloom of Good Friday over against the sepulcher! The angel has already come; the stone is already rolled away. He is not here. He is risen. See the place where the body of thy loved one lay; then go quickly with this song on thy lips: "He is risen from the dead; he goeth before me; the Master came and called for him; and where the Master is, there my beloved is also."—*Christian Union.*

April 21.

SING with all the sons of glory,
Sing the resurrection song!
Death and sorrow, earth's dark story,
To the former days belong.

Life eternal: Heaven rejoices,
Jesus lives, who once was dead;
Join, O man, the deathless voices;
Child of God, lift up thy head!

—*Dr. Irons.*

WE believe that out of every grave there blooms an Easter lily, and in every tomb there sits an angel. We believe in a risen Lord. Turn not your faces to the past that we may worship only at His grave, but above and within, that we may worship the Christ that lives. And because He lives, we shall live also.—*Abbott.*

April 22.

THAT Christianity which does not help us when most we need help is of a very suspicious character and quality. It would be a heart-breaking thing to go to the grave and deposit there anything which was vital, anything which was necessary to the happiness or perfection of anyone we really loved. Those scenes which in cemeteries and graveyards I have sometimes witnessed, when friends could not be torn away from the decaying material which was there deposited, are very sorrowful scenes. While they speak of a love which is impressive and beautiful, they also speak of an ig-

norance which is painful, and of a low spirituality which is depressing. And yet I suppose I should be counted a heathen, if on such an occasion I should say, "My good sir, or madam, there is nothing there in that grave but temporary consolidations of a little atmosphere, with a few pounds of phosphate of lime." Yet that is the literal truth of the case. If it were scattered to the four winds, it would make no difference to the happiness or progress of your beloved one. "But"—but what? "It was all I had left of my father, my mother, my child." Alas! alas! that any of us should be so unimpressed by the teachings of our Lord and His apostles that we should ever feel like that! Outside of what remains there, *all* is left. And where there has been the true vital thing we call "love," that love of God whence it came is sure to restore that which love needs for its perfecting. For that God, who is love, will never deny to love that which it needs for the completeness of its own life.—*Rev. Reuen Thomas, D.D.*

April 23.

FROM the recesses of a lowly spirit,
Our humble prayer ascends; O Father, hear it!
Upsoaring on the wings of awe and meekness,
Forgive its weakness!

We see Thy hand—it leads us, it supports us;
We hear Thy voice—it counsels and it courts us;
And then we turn away; and still Thy kindness
Forgives our blindness.

O, how long-suffering, Lord! but Thou delightest
To win with love the wandering; Thou invitest
By smiles of mercy, not by frowns or terrors,
Man from his errors.

Father and Saviour! plant within each bosom
The seeds of holiness, and bid them blossom
In fragrance and in beauty bright and vernal
And spring eternal!

—*John Bowring.*

April 24.

TRUST Him implicitly, submit to Him cheerfully, and you will find that all shall be well; that more grace will be given you; that the heavier the trial the larger will be the blessed measure of the strength. The Shepherd is leading you in the right way to His own blessed fold. Leave it all to Him.

—*Alexander McKenzie, D.D.*

WE cannot minister while heart-fever of any kind is on us. We may go on with our work, but we cannot do it well, and there will be little blessing in it. Discontent hinders any life's usefulness. Jesus loved Martha, and accepted her service because He knew she loved Him; but He plainly told her that her feverishness was not beautiful, and that it detracted from the worth and the full acceptableness of the good work she did; and He pointed her to Mary's quiet peace as a better way of living and serving. Anxiety of any kind unfits us in some degree for work. It is only when Christ comes and lays His hand upon our heart, and cures its fever.

that we are ready for ministering in His name in the most efficient way.—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

April 25.

HAST thou a care whose pressure dread
Expels sweet slumber from thy bed?
To thy Redeemer take that care,
And change anxiety to prayer.

Hast thou a hope from which thy heart
Would feel it almost death to part?
Entreat thy Lord that hope to crown,
Or give thee strength to lay it down.

Whatever care doth break thy rest,
Whate'er the wish that swells thy breast,
Spread before God that wish, that care,
And change anxiety to prayer. —*Anon.*

WHEN John Knox lay all night on the floor of his chamber, crying, "Give me Scotland or I die!" was a wandering thought able to nestle in so much as a corner of his great soul? When that loved one in your home was tossing on the sick bed, and the physician's face grew anxious, and every step through the house was soft, and the children even forgot to laugh and play, did wandering thoughts obtrude their earthliness into your heart as you carried your burden to Jesus and begged for a precious life? Ah! wandering thoughts are the tell-tale of a pre-occupied mind; they are the sign hung out even at the mercy seat, "No room for Jesus in this inn." But when we put our faces between our knees, when the passion for the rescue of the perishing fills to

overflowing every chamber and corner of our souls, then the world can no more intrude upon our devotions than you can put another drop of water in a full barrel.—*Rev. A. E. Kittredge, D.D.*

April 26.

LONG do we live upon the husks of corn,
While 'neath untasted lie the kernels still.
—*Jones Very.*

WE come to the eventide with the impression of the morning watch all obliterated; probably with a conscience burdened by accumulations of sin upon an ungoverned spirit through the day. We feel that we must take a new start every time we seek God's presence. Our sense of spiritual progress is lost. Sinning and repenting is all our life; we do not have holy force enough to get beyond repentance in our devotion. Our prayers, instead of being, as they should be, advancing steps, are like the steps of a treadmill. Humane law has abandoned this, even as a punishment for felons; why should one whom Christ has made free inflict it upon himself? We need, then, something that shall make our prayerful hours support each other—the morning tributary to the evening, and the evening to the morning. Nothing else can do this so naturally as the habit of ejaculatory prayer. The *spirit* of prayer may run along the line of such a habit through a lifetime. So one may live in a *state* of prayer, "a devout man that prays always."—*Rev. Austin Phelps, D.D.*

April 27.

ASK God to show you your duty, and then do that duty well; and from that point you mount to the very peak of vision.—*Edward Everett Hale.*

THEN a voice within his breast
Whispered audible and clear,
As if to the outward ear,
"Do thy duty, that is best,
Leave unto thy Lord the rest."
—*Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.*

SOME one has said that ours is an age when every one wishes to reform the world, but no one thinks of reforming himself. We must begin with ourselves. Are we to have aught to give the world? Then we must first have received it. Life for God in public is a mere sounding brass and tinkling cymbal unless it is balanced by life with God in secret. It makes a great difference whether we go out, in a kind of social knight-errantry, or whether we have met with Jesus Christ in secret, and go forth with His commission and promise at our back, and with His love and inspiration in our souls.

—*Rev. James Stalker, D.D.*

April 28.

I TRUST in my soul
That the great master hand which sweeps over the whole
Of this deep harp of life, if at moments it stretch
To shrill tension some one wailing nerve, means to fetch
Its response the truest, most stringent and smart,
Its pathos the purest, from out the wrung heart
Whose faculties, flaccid it may be, if less
Sharply strung, sharply smitten, had failed to express
Just the one note the great harmony needs.—*Owen Meredith.*

No fever can attack a perfectly sound body; no fever of unrest can disturb a soul which has breathed the air or learned the ways of Christ. Men sigh for the wings of a dove, that they may fly away and be at rest. But flying away will not help us. "The kingdom of God is *within you.*" We aspire to the top to look for rest; it lies at the bottom. Water rests only when it gets to the lowest place. So do men. Hence, be lowly.—*Drummond.*

April 29.

O SING, thou happy heart!
Thy world is all in bloom;
Sing through the grateful tears that start
At Jesus' opening tomb!

Sing, nor look backward, down
Thy dark, deserted past!
Before thee gleams thy promised crown;
Thou shalt reach home at last.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

"HE that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." We thank Thee for those words, Lamb of God, for many of our pious friends have already faded and disappeared. They have been taken away from our firesides and our bosoms; we call out for them, but they do not answer; their portraits smile upon us from the walls; and we steal away often to look at the garments which they were wont to put on. And their empty seats, and the silence in the halls never broken by their footstep, remind us that they are not here. But they have risen; and they walk in white, for they are

worthy. We do not know why God afflicts us ; but they know, and are comforted concerning us. They know why the good die first, while those whose hearts are dry as the summer's dust burn to the socket. . . . It is well with our Christian friends who have faded. They have faded into the life that never fades ; and when they shall be permitted to receive us into their white-robed company, their joy will be full.—*Rev. Jacob M. Manning, D.D.*

April 30.

THE secret of perfect trust is very simple, yet but few learn it. We seek by many mistaken ways an increase of faith, and find only disappointment. Our greatest mistake is *looking within* rather than without. Mrs. Fletcher tells of a convert's dream : how he seemed to be deep down in a well, and looking up could see through the narrow rim of the well's mouth a star that seemed to let down silver lines of light to lift him up. If he looked up steadily, he felt himself rising ; if he looked down into the well, he felt himself falling ; and by simply keeping his eyes fixed upward he rose out of the well. The dream is a parable : if we look up we go up ; if we look down we go down. Faith is never perfected by a morbid introspection, but by "looking away unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." To get our eyes off self and on Him, that is the simple secret of increase of faith.

—*Arthur T. Pierson, D.D.*

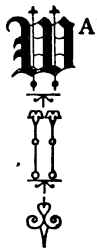
May.

✠

WINDS are growing sweeter
Day by day;
Spring is here, the fields have seen her,
And are growing greener, greener,
And the woods have found so much
In the magic of her touch,
That the golden mist of April
Deepens with the May.

—*Dora Read Goodale.*

FIFTH MONTH.



WARPED indeed must be the soul of the one who has no glad welcome for the magic month of May! What marvelous transformations a few warm days make! One day Mother Nature appears very unattractive in her shabby winter garb of dull browns and grays. But, behold! the soft southwest wind stirs through her rags; the sun gazes at her with fiery ardor one moment, and the dripping shower refreshes her the next; when suddenly she comes before our wondering eyes robed in garments of tenderest green and filling the air with languorous blossom scents. Ever new, ever delightful, is the gracious beauty, the revivifying influence of the early spring. The Giver of all good has indeed placed us in a most beautiful world. But how many of us go on our way with unseeing eyes, shutting out all the sweet influences of this wonderful outer sanctuary, and never allowing ourselves to come near to the great throbbing heart of Nature, whose shy secrets she is so willing to impart to her true disciples. We are too unready to learn the lessons spread on the open book of God's wide out-doors—lessons that only he who understands can interpret aright, so intangible are they, so elusive; but, when once comprehended, how sweet, how satisfying, how holy, is the communion with nature and nature's God!

May 1.

THE first of May! woods and a rocky shore;
South winds from Eden o'er a sea of glass;
Earth velvet-carpeted with emerald grass;
The wooded ground with wild flowers spangled o'er,
Anemones, hepaticas, and store
Of yellow adder's tongue, and violets blue,
And clustered pepper root, besprent with dew,
And bloodroot's spotless chalice, pure from gore,
And frail spring beauties, delicate and sweet,
And nodding columbine with scarlet glow,
And countless things all bursting into blow,
The vernal queen of all the year to greet.
Ah me! the very ground seems all alive!
The fossils in these rocks almost revive!

—*Rev. George Lansing Taylor, D.D.*

No doubt the crocus and its companions have found it dark and a little rough and chilly down under the garden mold. Very slight were the delicate tendrils, very tender the starting shoots that persisted, under difficulties, in coming up. Very different was the world down there, at the dark starting place, from the sunlit space above. But the crocus was in earnest. Its companions as well as itself meant to arise, and it used its aspirations and its patience and its floral push, and came to blossom out its fragrance and its gladness. Can we do less in our own way? The crocus in one sense could not resist. We alone and others like us can hold back when the glorious Sun with healing in His beams would draw us to the light and warmth and free unfolding of heaven-endowed

possibilities. Are we all blossoming all the help and sweetness into our homes that we were intended to? The crocus does not wait to be placed in public gardens, but comes up where it feels the call. And there are "the lilies" that He must have loved. We know their lesson. Shall we not be care free, joyful hearted, in all our households? And as are the households so is the great, wide world.

—*Illustrated Christian Weekly.*

May 2.

NEW flowery scents strewed everywhere,
New sunshine poured in largess fair,
"We shall be happy now," we say;
A voice just trembles through the air
And whispers, "May."

—*Susan Coolidge.*

SPRING winds have melted the snows and dried the soil; and now the husbandman goes forth with plow and harrows to the field, and waits for sunshine and showers to quicken the seed which he spreads broadcast on the ground. He sows in faith that the season will come. Far away from the billows that are breaking out on the sandy shore the vessel lies upon the beach doomed, as it would seem, to rot; why then do men climb her shrouds, and man her yards, and shake out broad sheets of canvas to the breeze, and loose her moorings? Theirs are acts of faith; they believe in the law of tides. And shall they that plow the land, or they that plow the sea, have such faith in the stability

of nature's laws, and shall we have less faith in the promises of nature's God?—*Guthrie.*

May 3.

SUCH as every one is inwardly, so he judgeth outwardly.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

DEEPEN all Thy work, O Master!
Strengthen every downward root,
Only do Thou ripen faster,
More and more, Thy pleasant fruit.
Purge me, prune me, self abase,
Only let me grow in grace!

Let me grow by sun and shower,
Every moment water me;
Make me really hour by hour
More and more conformed to Thee,
That Thy loving eye may trace
Day by day my growth in grace!

—*F. R. Havergal.*

IT is a painful thing, this pruning work, this cutting off of the overluxuriant shoots, in order to call back the wandering juices into the healthier and more living parts. In religion it is described thus: Every branch in Me that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. The keen edge of God's pruning knife cuts sheer through. No weak tenderness stops Him whose love seeks goodness, not comfort, for His servants.

—*F. W. Robertson.*

ONLY he who fully knows the worth of what he renounces gains the true blessing of renunciation.

—*George William Curtis.*

May 4.

THINE, O death, was the furrow; we cast therein our precious seed. Now let us wait and see what God shall bring forth for us. A single leaf falls—the bud at its axil will shoot forth many leaves. The husbandman bargains with the year to give back a hundred grains for each one buried. Shall God be less generous? Yet, when we sow, our hearts think that beauty is gone out, that all is lost. But when God shall bring again to our eyes the hundredfold beauty and sweetness of that which we planted, how shall we shame over that dim faith, that having eyes saw not, and ears heard not, though all heaven and all the earth appeared and spake, to comfort those who mourn.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

"CROWDING out" is often practicable where "rooting out" is not. It is, at the best, a tedious and uncertain process by which the gardener roots out the weeds from the vegetable patch or the greensward. But it is, in many a case, a sure and effectual process by which the weeds crowd out the grass and the vegetables. The less we dig and pull at our evil habits and low desires the less danger there will be of breaking the stem short off and leaving the root to spring again. The weed's way is nature's way, and it is the surer way. Let a good desire take root in the heart, a noble thought in the mind, a useful work in the hand; then there will be so much the less room for evil to spring up and to spread.—*Sunday School Times.*

May 5.

IN spring, the seeds hid deep in earth's dark mold
Push upward, striving still to find the light,
Till in full beauty they their buds unfold,
And, free from earth soil, robed in purest white,
Bloom on, through fair June days, with sunshine bright.

So thou, my soul, if striving e'er to rise
Through this dark mold of sin and doubt, shalt see
The Sun of righteousness in God's fair skies;
And, having seen, it shall be given to thee
To live in light to all eternity.

—*Margarette L. Ballard.*

As the flower is gnawed by frost, so every human heart is gnawed by faithlessness. And as surely, as irrevocably, as the fruit bud falls before the east wind, so fails the power of the kindest human heart if you meet it with poison.—*Ruskin.*

I HAVE found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write; I have found how He comes to man's soul, how He dwells, rules, guides, consoles, how He suffices. I have found the Way, the Truth, the Life. Fourteen years ago I prayed earnestly that He would be my sole teacher and show me the Way of Life—that He would be the center of all my studies, all my motions; and this balmy Saturday evening I review the past, as Jacob did his fourteen years of servitude. With my staff I crossed this Jordan; now I am become two bands. Wonderful guidance! Blest Angel of the Covenant, who has redeemed me from all evil!—*James Smetham.*

"MORE things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of."

May 6.

WHO waits until the wind shall silent keep
Will never find the ready hour to sow;
Who watcheth clouds will have no time to reap.
—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

JUST as the plowman takes furrow by furrow, one ended before another is begun, so our duties come to us, not in battalions, but singly; our life's plan, if we read it aright, is beneficently designed; we are not abandoned to blind chance: confusion and entanglement can only come by our choosing to refuse guidance and to shape our lot for ourselves. So it will seem to us when we have come to the end of it, and can look back—a divinely ordered whole, which even our failures cannot mar; for God only asks of us our best and bravest, and if we give Him these, we need not grieve overmuch if some of the furrows refuse to run straight. The failure may be success after all, as far as our discipline is concerned. . . . Our very failures may be an answer to our doubts—evidence of a time when we shall neither faint nor fail, when the acre will be freed from weeds, and ready for a fair harvest. For in the midst of our saddest blunders we have visions of higher things, unfulfilled aspirations, cravings for growth; and these will be satisfied, every one of them. We who have tested the bitter fruit of the

tree of knowledge are meant to inherit the tree of life; and somewhere else the task dropped here may be taken up and made good.—*Sunday at Home.*

May 7.

STREWING the golden grain,
Sowing for sun or rain,
Shall this suffice that our souls may eat?
There is whiter bread than is made from wheat.

Ah! for the irksome deed
Time plucks up as a weed!
But myrtle and lily and balsam leaf,
How came these in our harvest sheaf?

'Tis our angels softly go
After us down the row,
And the broken hope and the hidden need
Sow in our furrows for beauty seed.

—*Katharine Lee Bates.*

TAKE that thwarted ambition of yours, recognize its selfishness, and offer through the experience, in its full pain and illumination, Whittier's prayer:

"Change the dream of me and mine
To the truth of Thee and Thine."

Make that stern disappointment an austere John the Baptist, to bring you to Christ. If you pull down the nest of a sparrow it will build again in the same place; but if you pull it down several times it will seek a home elsewhere. Human beings are not so wise; they go on building habitations for happiness and hope in this poor world of ours, and they see them pulled down and scattered to the

winds a score of times, and each time, after a brief interval of sighs and tears, begin building again. Imitate the bird that, when its nest is destroyed, builds again, but higher. Open your mind to the utter vanity of seeking for your heart a home below the heavens, and bid the stern experience welcome that sends you to the Highest.

—Rev. George A. Gordon, D.D.

May 8.

"I FEEL as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky,
As weak, yet as trustful also;
For the whole long year I see
All the wonders of faithful nature
Still worked for the love of me.
Winds wander and dews drip earthward,
Rains fall, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but to prosper
A poor little violet."

YOUNG men and women, the sermon of the hour for you is in the words, "She hath done what she could." Let it preach to you of the work you have to do in these high and rare years of youth that are so rapidly gliding by. Do what you can toward bringing out the noblest possibilities of your nature. Do what you can to think high thoughts, to love true things, and to do noble deeds. Temptations beset you like those that have filled hearts as light as yours with inexpressible sorrow. Are you doing what you can to make yourself strong to resist them? Before you hang the gilded trinkets of fashion, the

embroidered banners of selfish lives. Do what you can to live for higher aims than these. Your lives are growing riper, your heads are growing wiser. Are you doing what you can to balance this with growth of heart, making the affections as much richer and warmer; the conscience, God's best gift to man, brighter and more commanding? Are you doing what you can to follow your truest and to do your best?—*Rev. J. Lloyd Jones.*

May 9.

THE Christian is he whose life work glows and grows under his hand, who is conscious of an unceasing call for strenuous activity, who takes for his watchword the great apostle's question: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"—*Rev. A. P. Peabody, D.D.*

AND see how everywhere
Love comforts, strengthens, helps, and saves us all;
What opportunities of good befall
To make life sweet and fair.

—*Celia Thaxter.*

THERE is always some one to smile at, somebody to give your chair to, somebody to whom a book, a flower, or even an old paper would be a boon. These small attentions will open the way to confidence, will make it possible that in need these friends will give you opportunities to help them which, unless you had shown thoughtfulness and regard for them, they could never have done. A quiet, sympathetic look or smile many a time unbars a heart that needs help which you can give.—*Josephine Pollard.*

May 10.

If pansies, with their dark impassioned faces,
Had but been given the power of human speech,
What is the lesson that, from lowly places,
Each tender, fragrant voice to us would teach?

Perchance in tones like tinkling dewdrops sighing,
What their lives tell, their velvet lips would say:
"Forget life's trials that are round thee lying,
And be the brightest in the darkest day." —*Anon.*

We are not apt enough to think of our daily work as the Good Shepherd's pasture field. We are too apt to give heed to a miserable distinction between the sacred and the secular, and to seek to get out from what we call the secular into what we call the sacred, that we may find spiritual pasture fields. . . . You and I know that the grand Martin, who dared to cease to be a monk and give himself to daily toil that had real meaning in it, was right. The most sacred service may sometimes consist as much in Paul's tentmaking as in Paul's preaching. This is sacred service, this is God's work; praying, communing, preaching, buying, selling, bricklaying, *doing* whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, which God's providence has thrust into your hand to do—doing them for God's sake and in His name, the shining motive for them God's glory. "Why, my voice was from God, and I sang as unto God," said Jenny Lind. And her songful duty was sacred duty because she put God in it. The daily toil is a real spiritual pasture field; and the best of herbage we shall find in it, if we will

have it so, if we will take into it the motive of pleasing God, and so of doing in it our very best. How the spiritual life may nobly grow in this pasture field of daily duty done from a divine impulse!

—Wayland Hoyt, D.D.

May 11.

"ANGEL of the Springtime," said she,
"Show me where to sow my grain.
Shall I plant it round my doorstep,
Or afar upon the plain?"

"At thy feet," the angel answered;
"Sow at once the nearest field!
First thy dooryard, then beyond it
Let new fields new furrows yield.

"Fill the nearest spot with gladness,
Fill thy home with goodness sweet;
Wider fields shall ask thy sowing,
If thou first sow at thy feet!

"Thus for thee shall widening harvests
Wave their manifolding grain,
Till the sixtyfold, the hundred,
Gild the dooryard and the plain."

—Mrs. Merrill E. Gates.

May 12.

YOU remember the old story of how Michael Angelo wore ever on his forehead, fastened in his artist's cap, a lighted candle, which always shone brightly on his work, and kept his shadow from falling on it. If I could always have thus the light of Christ's felt presence ever falling onward on my path, keeping the shadow of self behind and out of sight, ah, what an easy climb it would be then!—*Anon.*

To know how to be ready we must be able to finish. Nothing is done but what is finished. The things which we leave dragging behind us will start up again later on before us and harass our path. Let each day take thought for what concerns it, liquidate its own affairs and respect the day which is to follow, and then we shall be always ready. To know how to be ready is at bottom to know how to die.—*Henry Frederic Amiel.*

May 13.

THERE is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
There is ever a something sings alway—
There's the song of the lark when the skies are clear,
And the song of the thrush when the skies are gray.
The sunshine showers across the grain,
And the bluebird trills in the orchard tree;
And in and out when the eaves drip rain,
The swallows are twittering ceaselessly.
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear—
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear!
There is ever a song somewhere!

—*James Whitcomb Riley.*

THE flowers got into a debate one morning as to which of them was the flower of God; and the rose said, "I am the flower of God, for I am the fairest and the most perfect in beauty and variety of form and delicacy of fragrance of all the flowers." And the crocus said, "No, you are not the flower of God. Why, I was blooming long before you

bloomed. I am the primitive flower; I am the first one." And the lily-of-the-valley said, modestly, "I am small, but I am white; perhaps I am the flower of God." And the trailing arbutus said, "Before any of you came forth I was blooming under the leaves and under the snow. Am I not the flower of God?" But all the flowers cried out, "No, you are no flower at all; you are a come-outer." And then God's wind, blowing on the garden, brought this message to them: "Little flowers, do you not know that every flower that answers God's sweet spring call, and comes out of the cold, dark earth, and lifts its head above the sod, and blooms forth, catching the sunlight from God and flinging it back to men, taking the soft south wind from God and giving it back to others in sweet and blessed fragrance—do you not know they are all God's flowers?" All they that take this life of God, and, answering it, come forth from worldliness and darkness and selfishness, to give out light and fragrance and love, they are God's flowers.

—Rev. Lyman Abbott, D.D.

May 14.

THERE are nettles everywhere,
But smooth green grasses are more common still;
The blue of heaven is larger than the cloud.

—E. B. Browning.

BACK and forth the plow was driven. The field was covered with grasses and lovely flowers, but remorselessly through them all the share tore its way,

cutting furrow after furrow. It seemed that all the beauty was being hopelessly destroyed. But by and by harvest time came, and the field waved with golden wheat. That was what the plowman's faith saw from the beginning.

Sorrow seems to destroy the life of a child of God. Its rude share plows again and again through it, making many a deep furrow, gashing its beauty. But afterward a harvest of blessing and good grows up out of the crushed and broken life. That is what God intends always in trial and sorrow. Let us have the plowman's faith, and we shall not faint when the share is driven through our heart. Then by faith we shall see beyond the pain and trial the blessing of richer life, of whiter holiness, of larger fruitfulness. And to win that blessing will be worth all the pain and trial.—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

May 15.

I WANDERED lonely where the pine trees made
Against the bitter east their barricade,
And, guided by its sweet
Perfume, I found, within a narrow dell
Amid dry moss and dead leaves at my feet,
The trailing spring flower, tinted like a shell.

And, bending o'er it not irreverent,
I thought of lives thus lowly clogged and pent,
Which yet found room
Through daily cumberings of deep decay and death
To give to heaven the sweetness of their breath
And to the earth the beauty of their bloom.

—*Whittier.*

DID you ever hear a robin sing?—or rather, I mean, did you ever listen to a robin's song? . . . He sang about the sunshine breaking through the cloud; about the rainbow smiling over the weary, rain-clogged earth; about the mild, still, hazy autumn days that soothe the September gale to sleep; he sang of the glory of the dawn after the dark night; sang, too, about the crumbs that little children strew upon the ground when it is covered with snow; and about the moist, warm wind that releases the frozen streams, and unwraps the young buds from their winter swathing bands. And because he sang in praise of all these sweet things, and yet had known and felt all the sad and gloomy ones that came before, his song was so cheerful and yet so touching, so contented and yet so plaintive, that none might hear it unmoved, or ponder on it untaught.—*Mary S. Claude.*

May 16.

I REST beneath the Almighty's shade;
My griefs expire, my troubles cease;
Thou, Lord, on whom my soul is stayed,
Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.
—*Charles Wesley.*

EVERY day brings to each of us opportunities which we may neglect or never notice. We have an opportunity of speaking in behalf of truth and justice, and we are silent. We decline to take our stand against public prejudice or public opinion.

We are afraid of being opposed or ridiculed or of being out of the fashion; and so we do nothing when we ought to act, and the opportunity goes by. We are like the man who hid his pound in a napkin and buried it in the earth, and said, "Lord, I was afraid!" We are not like the woman who put her two mites into the treasury, and was probably criticised by the bystanders for her very small donation. Yes, she may have been criticised by them; but, then, she was commended by Jesus, and has gone into the gospels of mankind as an example of right-doing. She did not lose her opportunity. Let us do what we can, and we shall not be followed into the other world by our lost opportunities bearing witness against us in the great day of account and retribution. Every day brings some opportunity. Every movement of conscience is an opportunity. And remember that we are never called to do anything more than is in our power. If we can say, "I have done what I could," that is enough.

—James Freeman Clarke, D.D.

May 17.

SOME sow the seed, then sit and wait
For suns to shine and rains to fall,
And mourn the harvest comes so late,
Or fear it will not come at all.

Some, single minded, still work on,
Nor stop to ask or understand;
The rose-bloom of success is won,
And harvests ripen at their hand.

—M. P. Neall.

DID you ever stop to ask what a yoke is really for? Is it to be a burden to the animal which wears it? It is just the opposite. It is to make its burden light. Attached to the oxen in any other way than by a yoke the plow would be intolerable. Worked by means of a yoke it is light. A yoke is not an instrument of torture; it is an instrument of mercy. It is not a malicious contrivance for making work hard; it is a gentle device to make hard labor light. It is not meant to give pain, but to save pain. And yet men speak of the yoke of Christ as if it were a slavery, and look upon those who wear it as objects of compassion. For generations we have had homilies on the "Yoke of Christ," some delighting in portraying its narrow exactions; some seeking in these exactions the marks of its divinity; others apologizing for it, and toning it down; still others assuring us that, although it be very bad, it is not to be compared with the positive blessings of Christianity. How many, especially among the young, has this one mistaken phrase driven forever away from the kingdom of God! Instead of making Christ attractive, it makes Him out a taskmaster, narrowing life by petty restrictions, calling for self-denial where none is necessary, making misery a virtue under the plea that it is the yoke of Christ, and happiness criminal because it now and then evades it.

—*Professor Henry Drummond.*

GOVERN the lips
As they were palace doors, the king within.

—*Edwin Arnold.*

May 18.

OUR grand business in life is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.—*Carlyle.*

THE word "unspotted" is very suggestive; it means *not bespattered.* Keep thyself in such relation to the world as not to be spattered by it. We can thus be in the world and not of it, and so deport ourselves toward it that the purity of our religion shall not be spattered by its pollution. I have known men who were good Christians, pure in heart, but in business and social relations had become spattered. They went into business determined to be honest; but the atmosphere in which they moved, the maxims of men with whom they came in contact, so influenced them that their very honesty was spattered by the dishonesty of others. O, how many good men have had their characters spattered by doubtful actions, by some mistake they have made, by not being thoroughly and at all times true to their convictions!—*A. C. Dixon, D.D.*

May 19.

UP and down our lives obedient
Walk, dear Christ, with footsteps radiant,
Till these garden lives shall be
Fair with duties done for Thee.

—*Phillips Brooks.*

"THE cup which My Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" It was a greater thing to say and

do that than to calm seas or raise the dead. Prophets and apostles could work wondrous miracles, but they could not always do and suffer the will of God. To do and suffer God's will, no matter where it leads us nor what it takes from us, is still the highest form of faith, the most sublime Christian achievement. To have the bright aspirations of young life forever blasted; to bear daily a burden never congenial, and to see no relief; to be pinched by poverty when you only desire a competency for the good and comfort of loved ones; to be fettered by some incurable physical disability; to be stripped bare of loved ones until you stand alone to meet the shocks of life—to be able to say in such a school of discipline, "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?"—this is faith at the highest, and spiritual success at the crowning point. Great faith is exhibited not so much in ability to do as to suffer.—*Rev. Charles Parkhurst, D.D.*

May 20.

THE self-life is our greatest trouble. It is so various in its manifestations. Resist it in one place, it will break out in another. When you have overcome it in some hideous form it will insinuate itself in congratulations for your victory. It will appear as an angel of light, so guileless and innocent, excusing faults as infirmities, anger as highly-strung nervousness, ambition as zeal for God. It will freely vaunt its sinlessness and freedom from the

very root of evil. Its heads are as many as the hydra's. It is like the weed which spoils our waters; or like the velvety moss of the American forests—creeping everywhere, but stifling life from the trees to which it clings. We must die to self if we would taste of the deep, tranquil, satisfying Life of God.

—*Rev. F. B. Meyer.*

ONLY a grain of wheat,
So small that folk don't mind it;
Only a grain of wheat,
With the power of God behind it;
Only a buried grain;
Only the falling rain;
Only the sun's bright glory
Bursting through heaven's top story;
Only a grain, only a grain,
Buried and dying and living again.

There's harvest in a grain of wheat,
If given to God in simple trust;
For tho' the grain doth turn to dust,
It cannot die. It lives, it must—
And men shall have enough to eat.

—*Dr. Walton.*

May 21.

EVERY hour comes with some little fagot of God's will fastened upon its back.—*F. W. Faber.*

THE task of the present
Be sure to fulfill;
If irksome, or pleasant,
Be true to it still. —*Thomas Hill.*

RELIGION is not what men need to get these days. What the world is dying for and needing most of all

is Christ. Religion is not a very good thing to have much of, unless it has been lifted and refined by contact with Christ. Many people have got too much religion; it weakens them and disqualifies them for thorough, honest work. It makes them indolent and conceited and often in the way of people who want to do needed Christian work. Such people should throw away their old, wheezing, self-contained, self-included religion and get the Lord Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, into their lives. Christ is ethics, Christ is truth, Christ is love, all summed up in the unity of a perfect, holy, divine life.—*Rev. J. W. Lee, D.D.*

May 22.

AN easy thing, O Power Divine,
To thank Thee for these gifts of Thine!
For summer's sunshine, winter's snow,
For hearts that kindle, thoughts that glow,
But when shall I attain to this,—
To thank Thee for the things I miss?

—*Thomas Wentworth Higginson.*

"I NEED oil," said an ancient monk. So he planted him an olive sapling.

"Lord," he prayed, "it needs rain that its tender roots may drink and swell. Send gentle showers." And the Lord sent a gentle shower.

"Lord," prayed the monk, "my tree needs sun. Send sun, I pray Thee." And the sun shone, gilding the dripping clouds.

"Now frost, my Lord, to brace its tissues," cried the monk. And behold, the little tree stood spark-

ling with frost. But at evensong it died. Then the monk sought the cell of a brother monk and told his strange experience.

"I, too, have planted a little tree," he said; "and see! it thrives well. But I intrusted my little tree to its God. He who made it knows better what it needs than a man like me. I laid no condition; I fixed not ways or means. 'Lord, send it what it needs,' I prayed—'storm or sunshine, wind, rain, or frost. *Thou* hast made it, and *Thou* dost know.'"

—*Selected.*

May 23.

A HERMIT in America once told me when I asked him whether he found that way of life had lessened his temptations: "Dost thou not know, friend," said he, "that a tree which grows by itself is more exposed to winds and storms than another that stands surrounded with other trees in the woods?"

—*George Whitefield.*

BRIEF are the days and few
When the sky is utter blue,
And the wind goes over the grass
Like the laugh of a Maying lass.
But our God is good to all,
And some perfect days befall,
Notwithstanding.

We do what we can, and trust;
But our doing turns to dust,
And the night flows over the day
And washes its deeds away,
But whatso we truly try,
The world will not let it die,
Notwithstanding.

Then courage, my brothers brave,
And the precious remnant save!
Our hopes are like lamps of fire,
Set high, to lead us higher.
No man has yet lived his dream,
But we climb by things that seem,
Notwithstanding.

—*James Buckham.*

May 24.

To doubt is not to sin,—

"There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

The man who, climbing a mountain, stops to search the true path among the many trails that lead along the mountain side, and questions this one and that one to see whither it goes, is not doing wrong. Only he does wrong who idly or in despair gives up the search and fails to pursue the upward journey. All thoughtful souls have doubts. Life, even when most prosperous, is a mystery. Why are we here? For what are we here? What is our destiny? We may know the answers, but that will not prevent the questions arising again and again.

—*Rev. William Ingraham Haven.*

WHEN the goldsmith fashions a chalice for a king he first purifies the precious metal by fire to rid it of base alloy, and stamps it with the assayer's approval. Then he molds it into a fitting form for its high uses. Then he burnishes and polishes it, chasing and adorning it to make it lustrous. So our blessed Lord first tries our faith as by fire, till the

dross is gone, and He can stamp it "approved;" that is "Praise." Then He shapes a "vessel meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work;" that is "Honor." Then He puts on the finishing touches, till it flashes back the luster of His own face;" that is "Glory."

—*Rev. Arthur T. Pierson, D.D.*

May 25.

CROOKED and dwarfed the tree must stay,
Nor lift its green head to the day,
Till useless growths are lopped away.

And thus doth human nature do;
Till it hath careful pruning too,
It cannot grow up straight and true.

For, but for chastening severe,
No soul could ever tell how near
God comes, to whom He loveth, here.

. . . . . .

And thus, by ways not understood,
Out of each dark vicissitude
God brings us compensating good.

For Faith is perfected by fears,
And souls renew their youth with years,
And Love looks into heaven through tears.

—*Phœbe Cary.*

WE have but to name God before sorrow, and it changes color; name Him before burdens, and they grow less; name Him before the vanity of life, and it disappears. The whole sphere and scene of life is changed, lifted into a realm of power and wisdom and gladness.—*Theodore T. Munger, D.D.*

May 26.

GOD never works only for to-day. His plans run on and on. The web He weaves is from everlasting to everlasting, and if I can fill a part of that web, be it ever so insignificant, it will abide forever. And this is one of the most comforting thoughts to us. While on earth we may do something for eternity.

—Bishop Simpson.

"THE oak tree's boughs once touched the grass,
But every year they grew
A little farther from the ground,
And nearer to the blue."

WE are too much in the habit of looking forward to heaven as to something that *will be*—an easier, pleasanter story for us to read when we have finished this tiresome earth-narrative; a luxurious palace chamber to rest in after this life's drudgery is ended; a remote, celestial mountain retreat, where the sound of the restless waves of humanity forever fretting their shores will vex our ears no longer. And so we stumble on, pitying ourselves for the hard times we have to endure on earth, and singing our songs of "the sweet by-and-by," as if there were some saving merit in having patience with time, and in dreaming of a broader and happier realm that we call eternity. But the eternal issues are now and here, in our thoughts and deeds; in our simple, common, everyday relations to God and to our fellow-beings. To-day or never, here or nowhere, is eternity.—*Lucy Larcom.*

May 27.

Now let me come nearer, O Lord divine!
Make in my soul for Thyself a shrine;
Cleanse, till the desolate place shall be
Fit for a dwelling, dear Lord, for Thee!
Rear, if Thou wilt, a throne in my breast;
Reign, I will worship and serve my Guest.

—Mary Lowe Dickinson.

THERE is need of preparation. The life must be holy that Christ will employ. The vessel must be clean that the King will use. The heart must be broken through which God's love may flow. Some one gives a consecration prayer: "Lord, take me, break me, make me!" and tells the story of a golden cup which had been made out of old gold coins. These had lost the image and superscription originally upon them, and were then thrown into a melting pot and wrought into a beautiful cup. So ofttimes a human life has lost its beauty; and then the Master takes it, breaks it, and makes it over again in form of beauty. Then the King will use it.

—J. R. Miller, D.D.

May 28.

IT is almost always when things are all blocked up and impossible, that a happening comes. If you are sure you are looking and ready, that is all you need. God is turning the world round all the time.

—Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.

THE Lord is in His holy place,
In all things near and far;
Shekinah of the snowflake He,
And Glory of the star;

And Secret of the April-land
That stirs the field to flowers,
Whose little tabernacles rise
To hold Him through the hours.

He hides Himself within the love
Of those we love the best;
The smiles and tones that make our homes
Are shrines by Him possessed.
He tents within the lonely heart
And shepherds every thought;
We find Him not by seeking long,
We lose Him not unsought.

—*Rev. William C. Gannett.*

May 29.

MORE dear in the sight of God and His angels than any other conquest is the conquest of self, which each man, with the help of heaven, can secure for himself.—*Dean Stanley.*

THE place for us to put in the probe is in the core of our own hearts. The wounded French soldier on the battlefield found his emperor there; do we find our Lord and Master there? Are we giving *Him* the central throne there, and on all doubtful questions giving to Him the casting vote? Are we fighting resolutely with the sins that easily beset us? Are our lusts relaxing their hold, instead of binding us into a closer bondage? Do we grow more self-denying, more humble, more fearless for the truth, more patient under crosses, more thoughtful of other people and less of our own comfort, and more ready to put self under our feet that we may exalt

Jesus? Is our faith getting stronger, our hope becoming brighter, and our love growing more pure, more ardent, and more ready to "bear the burdens of others and so fulfill the law of Christ?" Are we catching more of the spirit of heaven as we draw nearer to it?—*Theodore Cuyler, D.D.*

May 30.

I HAVE been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day.—*Lincoln.*

LORD, I have shut my door—
Shut out life's busy cares and fretting noise;
Here in this silence they intrude no more;
Speak Thou, and heavenly joys
Shall fill my heart with music sweet and calm—
A holy psalm.

Yes, I have shut my door
On earthly passions, all its yearning love,
Its tender friendships, all the priceless store
Of human ties. Above
All these my heart aspires. O Heart Divine,
Stoop Thou to mine!

Lord, I have shut my door!
Come Thou and visit me. I am alone!
Come, as when doors were shut Thou cam'st of yore
And visitedst Thine own!
My Lord! I kneel with reverent love and fear,
For Thou art here!

—*M. E. Atkinson.*

May 31.

WHEN May is gone, of all the year
The pleasant time is past.

—*Edwards.*

IF we pray for any earthly blessing, we must pray for it solely "if it be God's will," "if it be for our highest good;" but for the best things we may pray without reservation, certain that, if we ask, God will grant them. No man ever yet asked to be, as the days pass by, more and more noble and sweet and pure and heavenly minded; no man ever yet prayed that the evil spirits of hatred and pride and passion and worldliness might be cast out of his soul—without his petition being granted, and granted to the letter.—*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*

WHAT is the perfection of which man is capable while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, "My son, give Me thy heart!" It is the "loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." This is the sum of Christian perfection; it is all comprised in that one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God; and as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"—thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;" these contain the whole of Christian perfection.—*John Wesley.*

June.

✣

LIKE the swell of some sweet tune
Morning rises into noon,
May glides onward into June.

—Longfellow.

AND what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days.

—James Russell Lowell.

Sixth Month.

ROYAL June is here in all her sumptuous beauty. Long, bright, glowing days, early sunrisings and late sunsets, with lingering, flower-scented twilights, seductively beckon us from the daily tasks which seem so irksome in the heat of summer. The wheels of work drag wearily, and we long to turn away from the flurry and worry and care of everyday living for rest and refreshment among the hills or by the sea. But the majority of us are obliged to repress this natural craving for change that possesses our souls at this beautiful season, and take up our daily work cheerfully and willingly. Things might be so much worse with us, remember. Look around and see if we do not readily discover some person with a far harder, more uncompromising lot than our own. We so often fail to recognize the blessings showered upon us until we compare our own lives, hard and monotonous though they may appear, with those others that are stripped of all grace and happiness. Therefore let us be thankful to our heavenly Father for the generous measure of health and home happiness and capacity for work vouchsafed to us. Let the "demon of discontent" find no abiding place in our hearts. Open wide the soul's windows to the generous blessings borne on the fragrant air of these early summer days—blessings "gladdened with the splendors of the divine Presence."

June 1.

SHOW us, dear June, that not in vain
Our lives need be!
Show us that we
Must also wait, through frost and rain,
To bloom like thee!

—*Lucy Larcom.*

ALL the doors that lead inward to the secret place of the Most High are doors outward—out of self, out of smallness, out of wrong.—*George Macdonald.*

FAR down in the depths of the forest, under the shadows of gloomy firs, far out on the rolling prairie, springing with the grass, under the full light of the fervid sun, are fair and fragrant blossoms, budding, blossoming, fading, dying, unseen by mortal eye. In millions of homes, scattered over this wide earth of ours, are fairer human blossoms, patient, gentle, thoughtful souls, the fragrance of whose daily sacrifice fills, unheeded, the air; the flowers of whose offerings wither unseen on the steps of the altar; the fruits of whose ceaseless toil are plucked by careless hands. How sweet the thought that there is no lot so low, no care so trifling, no life so hidden, that it escapes the *Father's* eye! How full of comfort the knowledge that there is no bud of hope, no blossom of joy, no tendril of effort, no leaf of life, that is not fed with the sun of His love, and watered with the dew of His mercy, to the end that it may bring fruit unto life eternal.—*Von Buhler.*

June 2.

WIDE flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles,
And every sense and every heart is joy. —*Thomson.*

THERE is a great song forever singing, and we're all parts and notes of it if we will just let Him put us in tune.—*Mrs. Whitney.*

IF opportunities to do good were like mastodons or some extinct race of creatures, men would make voyages to the ends of the earth to find one yet surviving, if possible. Or if they were as rare as diamonds men would dig up whole river beds to find them. But they are like the cattle of the field or the pebbles of the stream for number, and we pass them by without glancing at them, or spurn them with our heels because of their very commonness.—*Rev. J. F. Cowan.*

June 3.

JUNE! Is it June? I cannot make it true.
The bloom, the brightness here; but where are you?
So full of life, of song, of grace each day—
Earth at her best, and you so far away.

No more for you blossoms the red, red rose,
Or swelling tide of greenness overflows;
For you no more the lilac's purple spray,
Or golden twilight of the lengthened day.

No more for you doth hill or fragrant field
The tender solace of its beauty yield;
Noon's shimmering haze, the sunset's crimson glow,
The cool lake whitened with the lily's snow.

Your window, looking toward the western hills,
That all the room with gracious sunshine fills,
The unfolding dawn, the robin's homely cheer,
Are naught to you ; yet once to you how dear!

And so, how sad the lovely landscape's face ;
How wan the mellow moonlight's silver grace!
Better for me the autumn chill and sere
Than June, since you who loved it are not here.

—*Luella Clark.*

THERE is a white-throated song sparrow, not the most beautiful singer of the sparrow family, but still ranking high as a songster, that has this peculiarity —he sings by day or by night ; this is the fellow that pipes so bewitchingly from the syringa bushes near your bedroom window at night. He sings because song is in his heart ; and so I fancy it is in the output which we make. It is no use to simulate it ; but when our hearts are full, the utterances of our faith and trust are as sweet to the ear of Christ as a bird song at night.—*Rev. James E. Odlin.*

June 4.

FOR thy sake
The woven arches of her forests breathe
Perpetual anthems, and the blue skies smile
Between, to heal thee with their infinite hope.

—*Edmund C. Stedman.*

LIKE the Hebrews, we pray for quails and very likely get them, and along with them get something we did not pray for ; and something, too, that is a good deal harder to lose than quails are to catch. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," which is

another way of saying that when the garden has become so packed with trees, and the air so clustered with blossoms as to keep the daylight from sifting in, He cuts a swath through the midst of the garden, that we may be reminded again that there is a sky as well as a ground, and that down upon some of the verdure that remains rifts may be opened through which the heavenly light shall touch and play. Am I mistaken in thinking that there are some garden plots right in our midst that have grown so rich and rank that the very verdure has come to intervene and hide between the tenants of the garden and the Lord of the garden?

—*Rev. C. H. Parkhurst, D.D.*

June 5.

THOU hast but little sunshine, but thy long glooms are wisely appointed thee, for perhaps a stretch of summer weather would have made thee as a parched land and a barren wilderness. The Lord knows best, and He has the clouds and the sun at His disposal.—*C. H. Spurgeon.*

ALONG the path of a useful life
Will heart's-ease ever bloom;
The busy mind has no time to think
Of sorrow, or care, or gloom;
And anxious thoughts may be swept away
As we busily wield a broom.

—*Louisa M. Alcott.*

GOD gives everybody, I think, a cross, when he enters upon a Christian life. When it comes into

his hands, what is it? It is the rude oak, four-square, full of splinters and slivers, and rudely tacked together. . . . I see some men carrying their cross just as rude as it was at the first. Others, I perceive, begin to wind about it faith and hope and patience; . . . and at last their cross has been so covered with holy affections that it does not seem any more to be a cross. They carry it so easily, and are so much more strengthened than burdened by it, that men almost forget that it is a cross, by the triumph with which they carry it. Carry your cross in such a way that there shall be victory in it.

—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

June 6.

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand;
Little flower, if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

—*Tennyson.*

OFTENTIMES it is the little faults, little carelessnesses in conduct, little blemishes in character, the "no harms," that make even fairly good people almost useless, so far as their influence goes. There was a great lighthouse out at sea. One night the men lighted the lamps as usual. Some time afterward they saw that there appeared no light on the water where ordinarily there was a bright lane of beams. They examined their lamps—they were burning brightly. But they looked outside, and

there were millions of little insects on the glass so thickly piled there that the light could not get through. In the morning they learned that a ship had been wrecked close by—because the light had been obscured by the insects. You get the lesson? The lamp may be burning brightly in your soul or in mine, but little faults—pride, ugly tempers, selfishness, half-heartedness, bad habits of tongue, carelessness about paying debts or keeping promises, a hundred other such things—may so cloud our lives as to obscure the shining out of Christ in our souls. Perhaps already some soul has been lost because your lamp does not shine out with clear light. I counsel you, Christian young people, to be good, beautiful in your character, faithful in all duties, careful not in the smallest ways to dim the luster of the Christ-light within you.—*Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.*

June 7.

THE summer says: "Scorning thy straitened home,
Come out into the wide rooms made for thee
'Twixt the green hills or by the glorious sea.
In the sweet silence of pine forests roam;
Dream underneath the green, bird-haunted dome
Of a vast maple, till thy thoughts are free
From clogging cares, and, like the honey bee,
Fly wheresoever sweets abound. Yea, come
Where sun-kissed rivers wind the valleys through.
Give to the wave thy keel, the wind thy sail;
Sleep underneath thy roof of starry blue;
Climb mountain stairs, and wrestle with the gale.
Heir of fair Nature's riches, claim thy right,
And in thy vast possessions take delight."

—*Mary Frances Butts.*

THE Path of Life! At first it seems a dull and uninviting road—stony, dusty, straight, and prim. But set your feet in it, walk on steadily and perseveringly, and you will be surprised and delighted to find how it improves as you progress. The formal palings give way to hedges of hawthorn, fragrant and refreshing, the home of all kinds of singing birds. A little strip of soft turf, widening ever, runs along the hedgerow bank on either side. Here you may find primroses and violets; and see! a little runnel of pure water filters now through this ferny trench. O, it is a lovely road when you have walked in it a mile or two. None ever chose that road and repented of his choice. It is the path of sweet self-denial, noble self-conquest, of gentleness, meekness, temperance. It is the path that the Master trod. His footprints still dint its sod. Pray that little victories over self may early set your feet upon that path that brightens ever, wins more greenness, catches more sunshine, as it nears the home of your Father, the city of the great King!

—Frederick Langbridge.

June 8.

QUOTH the cedar to the reeds and rushes:
"Water grass, you know not what I do;
Know not of my storms, nor of my hushes,
And—I know not you." *—Jean Ingelow.*

How many a Christian pilgrim would never have seen anything of the spiritual manna, and the spiritual stream from the rock, had God listened to him

when, with fear and trembling, he besought Him not to lead him into a desert.—*Krummacher.*

TAKE hold with God in His steady work for lifting up the world, and you shall fairly forget that there are these grasshoppers and crickets screaming and chirping and asking questions around you, even if they aspire so far, in their wrangling disputations, as to doubt whether there be any world, be any heaven, be any God, or any life worth living. Let your vine blossom and bear fruit, let the fruit ripen and hang in fragrant and luscious branches heavy upon the bough, and you do not put the knife to the bark to see if the vine is alive. Nay, you do not argue with anyone who asks you if it be worth the manure you spread about its roots. Live in the life which enlarges, live with all your might in the Life of God, and you forget that anyone has asked whether life is worth the living.—*E. E. Hale, D.D.*

June 9.

THOU who seest my soul within,
Thou who knowest my unknown sin,
Through Thy holy eyes let me
Learn what sin is unto Thee!

If there be in me a thought
That Thy dear name honoreth not,
Pierce it with Thy pitying gaze
Till its silence turn to praise.

Make me, Pure One, as Thou art,
Pure in soul and mind and heart;
Never satisfied with less
Than Thy perfect holiness! —*Lucy Larcom.*

EVERY sin carries the soul farther from God. Every sin makes it just so much harder for the soul to appreciate spiritual things, to enter into the joy of God. Forgiveness does not mean that the sinner is made, in relation to his own soul, as if he had never sinned. He must still pay one penalty for sin, the penalty of the spiritual loss which every sin entails; though even this may be turned into blessing. The man by struggle against sin may gain a strength which, without that struggle, he could never have. Even sin may be transmuted into blessing. But this is what forgiveness means: It means that the sinner is made, in relation to God, as if he had never sinned. It means that the barrier which sin sets up between the soul of man and the love of God is thrown down. Forgiveness means that our sin is so put away that God, who hates sin, nevertheless loves us. This Christ has made possible. We may be forgiven.—*Rev. George Hodges.*

June 10.

"YEAR by year our hearts' best treasures
Bending angels heavenward bear,
And the circle here that narrows,
Year by year is widening there."

WE shall "know hereafter." The promise is absolute. God has nothing to conceal or defend in His providences. . . . They may show us that only these sorrows could have purified and perfected our love for our departed dead, and they may teach us that the heavenly ministry of our sainted friends may

have surpassed, both to ourselves and to glorified souls, the possibility of any earthly influence. In the day when all hidden things shall be made known, we may find that we needed these representatives of our hearts and homes in heaven more than we required them on earth. We may learn that their eyes were closed to earth's duties only that they might open upon nobler and grander duties in our behalf; that the hands which we folded so tenderly above the silent bosom took on new activity, and the mute lips we kissed so passionately became vocal in celestial services that will enhance our own immortal joys, and make heaven more homelike forever to us.

—Rev. J. Richards Boyle, D.D.

June 11.

LIKE Him who at the close of day
Was wont to climb the hills to pray,
My eyes to mountain heights I turn
When fretting fevers rage and burn.
With unmoved brow, unruffled form,
They face the lightning and the storm;
Their splendid calmness heals and stills;
I lift my eyes unto the hills!

Almighty God, I hear Thee speak
From every flaming mountain peak!
Revealed in majesty and grace,
Here I behold Thee face to face!
Not only are the seas Thine own,
The skies with stellar worlds bestrown
And prairies vast, O Power divine!—
The everlasting hills are Thine!

—Rev. Jesse Bowman Young, D.D.

THIS bodily life which we think so sacred, and which is such a mystery as it waits on the beating pulse and runs through the throbbing, tingling veins, is unutterably less precious than the other life of God in the soul. The life of the body wastes like the dropping sand, and is daily swept away, as the dust of the floor, into the tomb, whose door swings in a thousand turnings as we speak. But the other life, that Christ gives, is not consumed. The language of Scripture lament was not taken up over that. It is no vapor, no fleeing shadow, or withering flower, but firm, bright, and blooming with immortal vigor and increase.—*Dr. Cyrus A. Bartol.*

June 12.

OUR common Master did not pen
His followers up from other men;
His sermons were the healthful talk
That shorter made the mountain walk,
His wayside texts were flowers and birds,
Where mingled with His gracious words
The rustle of the tamarisk tree
And ripple wash of Galilee. —*Whittier.*

"ONE day to a time! Seemin' to me that our heavenly Father has given us our life in days, because He sees that we can't manage no more than that to once. Lots o' people might get on very well if they'd be content to take life like 'tis given; but they go wonderin' whatever they shall do next week, or whatever will happen to them next year, an'

so they get frightened, an' think that 'tis no good their tryin'—not a bit. I can mind once when I was a little boy helpin' mother to store away the apples. I put my arms round ever so many o' them an' tried to bring them all. I managed for a step or two. Then out fell one an' another, an' two or three more, till they was all rollin' over the floor. Mother laughed. 'Now, Dan'el,' says she, 'I'm goin' to teach you a lesson.' So she put my little hands quite tight round one. 'There,' said she, 'bring that, an' then fetch another.' I've often thought about it when I've seen folks who might be doin' ever so much good if they didn't try to do too much all to once. Don't go tryin' to put your arms round a year; an' don't go troublin' about next week. Wake up in the mornin' an' think like this: Here's another day come. Whatever I do, an' whatever I don't do, Lord, help me to do this—help me to live it to Thee."—*Daniel Quorm.*

June 13.

CHARACTER is the precipitate from the stream of conduct, which like the Nile delta gradually rises solid and firm above the parent river and continues its flow.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

THERE is a kind of fish which resembles sea grass. It hides itself in the midst of marine vegetation. Below is the head, looking like the bulb of the plant, and above is the body and the tail, looking

like the blade of sea grass. The ocean currents sway the fish and the grass alike, and so the little fish escapes being devoured by its enemies. They swim along, and one can hardly perceive where fish leaves off and grass begins, so perfect is the disguise. Now, there are a great many Christians whose lives are so blended with the world that they cannot easily be distinguished. They are swayed by worldly maxims and habits; they share with the world in its sinful pleasures. The difference between such Christians and worldlings is not apparent. If this is the kind of Christian life you are living you need not be afraid of persecution; the world will not think it worth while to molest such a Christian as that. You will not know what it is to drink of the cup that Christ drank of, and to be baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with. But let a man come out into the open; let him confess Christ as his Master; let him engage in some aggressive Christian work, and he will meet the same opposition which was experienced by the One who said, "I came not to send peace, but a sword."

—Rev. Edward Judson.

June 14.

HEAVIER the cross, the stronger faith;
The loaded palm strikes deepest root;
The wine juice sweetly issueth
Where men have pressed the clustered fruit;
And courage grows where dangers come,
Like pearls beneath the salt sea foam.

Heavier the cross, the heartier prayer;
The bruisèd reeds most fragrant are;
If wind and sky were always fair,
The sailor would not watch the star;
And David's psalms had ne'er been sung,
If David's heart had ne'er been wrung. —*Anon.*

BE not utterly cast down when tribulations come upon you thick and fast, and all the skies seem black with the storm of God's pitiless anger. Ah, it is love and not anger that sends these storms of the soul! The dark days are those which some time you will rejoice to remember. They are the days which shall live, which shall make an abiding impress upon your soul. Not like evanescent days of pleasure, not like smoothly monotonous days of peace; such as these fade quickly into oblivion and are as if they had never dawned. But the days of sorrow stand out like cameos against the background of life. They are the character builders, they are the destiny makers. What you are, what you yet may be, depends chiefly upon them. Hail, then, to the Angel of Sorrow, when, by the will of God, she comes to us! Dark is the shadow of her wings, but in her face shine the beauty of love and the steadfastness of faith.—*Zion's Herald.*

June 15.

COME forth into the light of things,
Let nature be your teacher. —*Wordsworth.*

WE are like Southern plants taken up to a Northern climate and planted in Northern soil. They

grow there, but they are always failing of their flowers. The poor exiled shrub dreams by a native longing of a splendid blossom which it has never seen, but is dimly conscious that it ought somehow to produce. It feels the flower which it has not strength to make in the half-chilled but still genuine juice of its Southern nature. That is the way in which the ideal life, the life of full completions, haunts us all. We feel the thing we ought to be beating beneath the thing we are.—*Phillips Brooks.*

June 16.

SINCERITY, I think, is better than grace.

—*Carlyle.*

LAID aside;
May not the little cup of suffering be
A loving cup of blessing given to thee?
The cross of chastening sent thee from above
By Him who bore the cross, whose name is Love?

—*Anon.*

HAVE you ever watched the exceedingly delicate and yet firm pressure of the hand of a skillful tuner? He will make the string produce a perfectly true note, vibrating in absolute accord with his own never-changing tuning fork. The practiced hand is at one with the accurate ear, and the pressure is brought to bear with most delicate adjustment to the resistance; the tension is never exceeded, he never breaks a string, but he patiently strikes the note again and again, till the tone is true and his ear is satisfied, and then the muscles relax and the pres-

sure ceases. The string may be a poor, little, thin one, yielding a very small note, but that does not matter at all ; it is wanted in its place, just as much as a great bass one, that can yield a volume of deep sound. The tuner takes just the same pains with it, and is just as satisfied when it vibrates true to the pitch, retaining its own individual tone. That string could not tune itself, and no machine was ever invented to accomplish it ; nothing but the firm and sensitive pressure of the tuner's own living hand can bring it into tune. Will you not trust your Tuner, and begin a note of praise even under the pressure?

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

June 17.

How beautiful it is to be alive!
To wake, each morn, as if the Maker's grace
Did us afresh from nothingness derive,
That we might sing, "How happy is our case!
How beautiful it is to be alive!"
To read in some good book, until we feel
Love for the one who wrote it ; then to kneel
Close unto Him whose love our soul doth shrive;
While every moment's joy doth more reveal
How beautiful it is to be alive.
Thus ever toward man's height of nobleness
Striving some new progression to contrive,
Till, just as any other friend's, we press
Death's hand ; and, having died, feel none the less
How beautiful it is to be alive.

—H. S. Sutton.

WHAT does it matter after all? Humble as it may be, my path is my own. Lowly as may be

my lot, it is what God has given me. Faint as may be its accents, my voice has its own accent. Be of good cheer, my soul! Love, adore, labor! The glory of God is over all; in a blade of grass as well as in the stars. Be of good cheer; heaven opens its portals to all who ever feel that they have wings. Be of good cheer; spread out your wings, and lift yourself upward!—*Madame de Gasparin.*

June 18.

If, threading a lab'rinth of ways unregainable,
Breasting the rock of one selfish desire,
We rose from the ashes of hopes unattainable,
Yet we are higher.

It was not all gloomy—the road we have trodden—
God's light was o'er us, if we were not blind,
God's hand to guide us through ways wet and sodden,
With tears left behind.

The future is shrouded; its unwritten story
May hold more of shadow than shine for our lot;
We leave in His hands both the gloom and the glory—
With Him who fails not.

—*Anon.*

We all have our discouraged days, when things do not go well. The young people fail in their lessons at school, although they have studied hard and really done their best. The mothers are tried in their household work. The children are hard to control. It has seemed impossible to keep good temper, to maintain that sweetness and that lovingness which are so essential to a happy day. Try as they will to be gentle, kindly, patient, their minds

are ruffled. They come to the close of the long unhappy hours disturbed, defeated, discouraged. They have done their best, but they feel that they have really failed. They fall upon their knees with only tears for a prayer. But if they will lift up their eyes they will see on the shore of the troubled sea of their little day's life the form of One whose presence will give them strength and confidence, and who will help them to victoriousness. Before His sweet smile the shadows flee away; at His word new strength is given, and after that work is easy and all goes well again.—*Bits of Pasture.*

June 19.

WHEN is the golden time? you ask—
The golden time for love;
The time when earth is green beneath,
And skies are blue above;
The time for sturdy health and strength,
The time for happy play.
When is the golden hour? you ask;
I answer you, "To-day."

To-day, that from the Maker's hand
Slips on the great world sea
As stanch as ever ship that launched
To sail eternally;
To-day, that wafts to you and me
A breath of Eden's prime,
That greets us, glad and large and free—
It is our golden time.

For yesterday hath veiled her face
And gone as far away
As sands that swept the pyramids
In Egypt's ancient day.

No man shall look on yesterday,
Or tryst with her again.
Forever gone her toils, her prayers,
Her conflicts and her pain.

To-morrow is not ours to hold,
May never come to bless
Or blight our lives with weal or ill,
With gladness or distress;
No man shall clasp to-morrow's hand
Nor catch her on the way;
For when we reach to-morrow's land,
She'll be, by then, to-day.

You ask me for the golden time—
I bid you "seize the hour,"
And fill it full of earnest work,
While yet we have the power,
To-day the golden time for joy
Beneath the household eaves;
To-day the royal time for work,
For "bringing in the sheaves."

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

June 20.

THE golden moments in the stream of life rush past us, and we see nothing but sand; the angels come to visit us, and we only know them when they are gone.—*George Eliot.*

THE God of joy bids me be happy, yet I let my heart be troubled. My mind tells me that gloom is sin, and straightway cheerlessness condemns me. Friends, a host of them, will be encamped around me; above me will float the banner of love; the work of my hands will be prospered; yet my life will be so sadly poised withal, and inclined away

from what is sane and peaceful, that the lightest touch of the finger of failure will overturn it into the Slough of Despond. O Christ of Cana, how may my life be a feast? O Thou who dost flood the universe with the light of Thy sun, shine in my life, not now and then, but forever! I am weary of joy's uncertainty, of the peace that is fickle as a desert stream. Grant me Thy peace that floweth as a river, Thy peace that recks not of its peacefulness, Thy joy whose essence is the joy of others. Make me so busy with useful work that I shall not feel the touch of the finger of failure. So breathe into me the energy of Thy strong purposes that I shall not need to sit at a feast. Help me to such pity for the troubles of others that I shall be careless whether my own heart is troubled or not. Let Thy joy be in me, that my joy be fulfilled!

—Amos R. Wells.

June 21.

Is thy path lonely? Fear it not, for He
Who marks the sparrow's fall is guarding thee;
And not a star shines o'er thy head by night,
But He hath known that it will reach thy sight·
And not a joy can beautify thy lot,
But tells thee still that thou art unforgot;
Nay, not a grief can darken or surprise,
Swell in thy heart, or dim with tears thine eyes,
But it is sent in mercy and in love,
To bid thy helplessness seek strength above. *—Anon.*

If only we knew how much we are surrounded with the tokens of mercy! The earth is full of

them ; grains of wheat, leaves, flowers, the commonest things, all have their tales to tell. Our ignorance hinders our thanksgiving—not that we are as thankful as we might be for the mercies that we do know of; perhaps if we were, more would be revealed to us. Say to yourself : "I am surrounded with mercies which I know not of. Lord, that I may praise Thee, let all things have their voice for me ! "—*The Quiver.*

June 22.

UNBROKEN sunshine and perpetual heat
Make deserts only. —*T. W. Parsons.*

I REMEMBER once reading of a woman who was passing a hard way ; and she had a dream. She thought she stood by a river's brink and saw lying in the water the darkest cross that she had ever seen ; it was fairly black as it lay in the water. And in her dream it seemed to her that the guide, or somebody by her side, said to her, "Lift it." "Why," said she, "how could I lift it? I cannot lift it." He said, "Lift it," and as she put her hand underneath the cross it seemed the lightest kind of cork, and came up as light as anything could be. It was heavy, it was dark, but when she put her hand under it it became light. You know we instinctively get away from troubles ; we think we *must* get away from them. If anybody hurts us—and we are in a world where there is a great deal of hurting going on, and those who are hurting may

be in the inside circle, those whom we love the best —the instinct is to get away, when if we could only see the deep meaning in this we would get closer, we would pick up our cross as in the picture, and we would say, "*My* cross." That cross may be your own child, and you should say, "Ah, he is my cross now, and I must carry him very closely!" If we could come to the Christ-spirit, to the Christ-love, we should say, "Because he has hurt me so, because she has hurt me so, because they are so far from God, I must carry them now so closely, carry them in spirit so pitifully."—*Margaret Bottome.*

June 23.

ONLY they whose faces shine with the glory of some inspiration which lifts them out of themselves shall ever do abiding work in this earnest world, and themselves shine in the memory of those who come after. "To press toward the mark of the *high* calling" is the secret of all true success.

—*Rev. H. W. Foote.*

BUILD now the house wherein thy soul would dwell
When sunny days are past;
Do now the gracious work, the message tell,
Whose memory sweet shall last;
Heed well the moments as they speed away
In time's mysterious flight;
Fill up with golden deeds the golden day
Ere fall the shades of night,
And when the sorrows of a world in pain
Fall heavy on thy heart,
When fades life's brightness, then of joy again
Thou yet shalt hold a part.

And when thy darkened eyes no more behold
The glory of the light,
Then shall a purer radiance thee enfold
To bless thy failing sight.
And when to thy dulled ear earth's voices wane,
And singing birds grow dumb,
Then angel harmonies with sweet refrain
Shall to thy spirit come,
For the veiled past shall show a smiling face,
And blessing shall not cease;
To all who work the works of truth and grace,
Life's memories shall bring peace!

—*Annie E. Lyddon.*

June 24.

BLACK, indeed, are many of the clouds that hang over the lives of God's dear children, and the blackest of all is the cloud of bereavement, charged and recharged with lightning and thunder; but they are always clouds that lie near the rising sun, and their lower edges are radiant and beautiful with the glory of the hidden disk of Providence. Behind them is the majestic and benevolent shining of a Father's face.—*Rev. William H. Bancroft.*

ONE of the happiest Christians that I know is happy on a very small income and in spite of some very sharp trials. The secret of happiness is not in the size of one's purse, or the size of one's house, or in the number of one's butterfly friends; the fountain of peace and joy is in the *heart.* As long as that keeps sweet and pure and satisfied with God's will, there is not much danger of acid words from the lips or of scowling clouds on the brow. Some

Christians excuse their morose temper or their gloomy despondencies by the plea of poor health, whereas much of their dyspepsia or other ailments may be the result of sheer worry and peevishness. The medicine they need cannot be got from the doctor or the drug store. A large draught of Bible taken every morning, a throwing open of the heart's windows to the promises of the Master, a few words of honest prayer, a deed or two of kindness, will do more to brighten your countenance than all the drugs of the doctors. If you want to get your aches and your trials out of sight, hide them under your mercies.—*Dr. T. L. Cuyler.*

June 25.

WHEN a man becomes a Christian he becomes not less of a man, but more of a man. Yonder is a factory with a thousand wheels, but it is low water. Now only fifty of the thousand wheels are in motion; but after a while the spring freshets come and the floods roll down, and now all the thousand wheels have bands on them and are in full motion. Before a man becomes a Christian only part of his nature is in activity and employment. The grace of God comes in with powerful floods of mercy and new impetus to action, and now instead of the fifty faculties, or fifty wheels, there are a thousand all in play and in full motion. Vastly more of a man since he became a Christian than before he became a Christian.—*T. De Witt Talmage.*

I HAVE laid my hand in His;
I have left the life that is,
And the life that is to be,
To the Leader leading me.

I have put my trust in Him,
And my faith is never dim;
For I know that He is just
In whose hand I put my trust.

I have never any fear
From the meads and mountains here,
Or hereafter's hills and meads,
Whitherward my Leader leads.

For His hands, I understand,
Hold the deeps of sea and land,
And whatever height there is
In the universe is His.

—*Tucker W. Taylor.*

June 26.

AH, they are those bits of struggles in which we learn to fight the great ones; perhaps these bits of struggles more than the great ones make up life.

—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

A GENTLEMAN living in the State of New York said, not long since, that one day when he was a boy he became angered at a command of his father, and as an act of revenge took an ax, and hacked a deep gash in a beautiful maple tree that stood in the yard. The bark soon grew over the wound, and nothing more was thought of it until many years later the tree fell before a wind storm. The gentleman went to the tree, and found the hack he had made had gone

to the heart of the tree, and the whole heart had become rotten. So likewise is he that harbors in his heart some secret sin. In the course of time he may rest assured "his sins will find him out." In the course of time his heart will become polluted, and he will fall.—*C. W. Bibb.*

FEELING the way—and all the way up hill;
But on the open summit, calm and still,
The feet of Christ are planted; and they stand
In view of all the quiet land.

Feeling the way—and though the way is dark,
The eyelids of the morning yet shall mark
Against the east the shining of His face,
At peace upon the lighted place.

Feeling the way—and if the way is cold,
What matter? since upon the fields of gold
His breath is melting; and the warm winds sing
While rocking summer days for Him.

Anon.

June 27.

LISTEN to the parable of the bush. Once upon a time in the wilderness there was a thorn bush. It looked at its surroundings and sighed. Could anything be more unfortunate? Above was a heaven of brass whence the sun shot out its fiery darts; about it danced the quivering air like the heat of a furnace. And below was the wilderness; here the barren rock cropped up from the ground; here the sand of the desert lay without a grass blade; there some stunted shrub struggled for existence; and yonder there was a patch of scanty herbage. "Ah,

if I were only in the king's garden," it sighed, "such as I have heard the travelers tell of, cared for and tended, there might be some hope for me. Or if, indeed, I were worth anything—hung with luscious fruit like the fig tree, or the vines which grow about the cottages of the people, and make glad the sons of men. Or if I were like the stately cedar of Lebanon, or the oak or ash. Or if I could distill some balm for the healing of the nations; or could crown the year with gladness like the golden corn. But a thorn bush; a thorn bush in the desert; mere sign of the curse; where there is never so much as a bird to build its nest in my branches!"

So the thorn bush whispered to the night winds, and told its sorrow to the stars when the nights were very still.

But lo! it chanced one day that Moses led his sheep to the back of the desert, and the thorn bush burned with fire, yet was unconsumed. And God dwelt in the bush. And forth from it there went the great commission for the deliverance of Israel; and all the ages have been lit up and blest by the vision and by the message that came from the bush on fire.

—*Mark Guy Pearse.*

June 28.

Is not the parable of the thorn bush the parable of our lives? Is it not so that we sigh within ourselves? Alas! of what good am I? or, indeed, what good can I ever be? If I were but placed, as others are, where there is some opportunity of usefulness!

Alas! I dwell in the desert. The heaven over me is as brass; the earth around me a wilderness. And in myself I do not seem to have anything like others have. I am not good and sweet and pure and true, but I am only the thorn bush—without gifts, without worth, without opportunity. The things that I hate do flourish—the sharp thorn in place of fruit; the injury in place of healing and of good.

But think of the thorn as that to which God comes—how, then, is it transformed and exalted into the house of God, and the desert in which it grows is hallowed into the very gate of heaven. Every branch and leaf of it is made now to convey the message to the heart of Moses, that God is come for the deliverance of His people. No matter what or where we may be, if we will give ourselves up to God, the very God of heaven shall dwell in us. Coarse, earthy, selfish, with a thousand things within us that defile us, with a thousand things about us that hinder, yet will God make our heart His home. And if He do dwell within us or speak in us, then is ours a sublimer majesty than that of the very angels; and then is the poorest patch of earth whereon we set our foot turned to holy ground.

—Mark Guy Pearse.

June 29.

Too long have we been willing to put that kingdom which He came to found away beyond the stars; to interpret all His glowing words about it as the description of some visionary state which has no

relation to this world. That was not the purpose of His mission; that is not the meaning of His Gospel. Recall the words of that prayer which He taught His disciples; surely that must embody all that is essential in His doctrine; and there is not one word in that which signifies that you and I are ever to live in any other world than this. There is no intimation of a wish that we may go to heaven; it is a prayer whose sole burden is that heaven may be brought to earth. That is the great meaning of the Master—always His first meaning.

—Washington Gladden, D.D.

I WANTED something. O so much!
So near it came, I'd almost touch
My heart's desire—when far away
'Twas drawn, and seemed a voice to say,
"There let it rest,
God knoweth best."

Like children crying for the moon,
I longed for this one priceless boon,
I wanted it within my hand
E'en then. How could I patient stand
And let it rest?
Doth God know best?

Then He who calmed the stormy sea
Came near to soothe and quiet me.
And to my longing, restless will
He gently whispered, "Peace! be still."
I let it rest—
God doth know best!

—Anon.

June 30.

A STREAMLET started singing seaward-ho!
But found across the path its fancy planned
A stone, which stopped it with the stern command,
"Thus far, and never farther, shalt thou go."
And where the tiny stream was wont to flow
A shining lake appeared, with silver strand,
Refreshing flower-strewn fields on either hand—
Reflecting starry skies and sunset glow.

So oftentimes we find our progress stayed
By stones that bar the steps we fain had trod;
Whereat we murmur with a sense of wrong,
Unmindful that by means like this is made
That sea of glass where stand the saints of God
To sing the new and everlasting song.

—*Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.*

CHARACTER requires a still air. There may be storm and upheaval around, but there must be peace within for the soul to thrive. But anxiety is the reverse of peace. It teases the mind with questions that it cannot answer; it broods over possible evil; it peoples the future with dark shapes; it frets the sensibilities with worrying conjecture. It spoils the present by loading it with the evil of to-morrow. Its tendency is, by dwelling on evil, to make us cowardly and selfish. Character cannot grow in such an atmosphere. Hence, as a matter of fact, we seldom find any great height and sweetness of character in an anxious-minded person, for the simple reason that it has no chance to grow; all the forces go in other directions.... "Take no thought." O, how wise the teaching! How blessed to be able to receive it!—*Rev. T. T. Munger, D.D.*

July.

✣

After the Maytime and after the Junetime,
Rare with blossoms and perfume sweet,
Cometh the round world's royal noontime,
The red midsummer of blazing heat,
When the sun, like an eye that never closes,
Bends on the earth its fevered gaze,
And the winds are still and the crimson roses
Droop and wither and die in its rays.

—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

Now comes the fullness of the year,
The flood tide of a living joy,
When never hope admits of fear,
Nor any pleasures cloy;
From birds that stir the meadow grass,
From winds that sweep the woodland ways,
A thousand voices come to pass
In chants of love and praise.

—*Elaine Goodale.*

SEVENTH MONTH.

"O BEAUTY manifold, from morn till night,
Dawn's flush, noon's blaze, and sunset's tender light."

IT is the flood tide of summer—the heart of the year. July reigns supreme. On every hand there is a splendid riot of color and bloom. The trees have lost the tender tints of spring, and stand clothed in thick vesture of deepest green. The ripe grass has fallen in long windrows under the rhythmic clatter of the mower, and the barns are fragrant with the piled-up mows of new hay. From the blazing noonday sun man and beast seek shady shelter with sighs of relief. Cattle stand knee-deep in the pool. The air fairly throbs with tropic heat. Across the blue depths of the summer sky trail fleecy clouds, while back of the distant hills a few "thunder heads" are visible. Nature has fallen asleep in this noon pause of the year.

But what do these dreamy midsummer days whisper to the receptive soul? Shall this fervid ripening period of the outer world find no parallel in our own lives? O may it be the blossoming time for many a repressed life, which shall ripen spiritually, bringing to bountiful fruition the gifts which God has so freely bestowed!

July 1.

JUNE is a scarlet rose,
The blossom of the year;
Her crimson, crumpled petals lie
To mark the footsteps of July;
Have peace,—the lily blows,
And other life is here.—*Dora Read Goodale.*

LIFE'S summer is too short for the perfecting of character. Under these cold, wintry skies moral maturity is unattainable. Man needs to be transplanted, that the divine life within him may be brought forth unto perfection. The tree that is dwarfed into a mere shrub in the arctic zone attains majestic proportions in the tropics. In the far North the magnolia is a pot plant; in the Gulf States it is a handsome tree, twenty or thirty feet high, purpling the heavens with bloom and filling the air with fragrance. We are now in the arctic zone of moral existence; by and by we shall be transplanted into the tropics. And who can tell what the most imperfect Christian will then become, when he is delivered from all the limitations and temptations of the present? Who can predict how great will be the expansion of character which he shall experience when all the clouds of ignorance and error have passed away, and he lives in the clear sunshine of the divine Presence?—*Rev. James M. Campbell.*

July 2.

O LORD, who art as a shadow of a great rock in a weary land, who beholdest Thy weak creatures weary of labor, weary of pleasure, weary of hope

deferred, weary of self; in Thine abundant compassion and unutterable tenderness, bring us, I pray Thee, unto Thy rest!—*Christina G. Rossetti.*

How easily He turns the tides!
Just now the yellow beach was dry;
Just now the gaunt rocks all were bare,
The sun beat hot and thirstily.
Each seaweed waved its long brown hair,
And beat and languished as in pain;
Then in a flashing moment's space
The white foam feet which spurned the sand
Paused in their joyous outward race,
Wheeled, wavered, turned them toward the land,
And a swift, legionary band
Poured on the waiting shores again.

How easily He turns the tides!
The fullness of my yesterday
Has vanished like a rapid dream,
And pitiless and far away
The cool, refreshing waters gleam;
Grim rocks of dread and doubt and pain
Rear their dark fronts where once was sea;
But I can smile and wait for Him
Who turns the tides so easily,
Fills the spent rock pool to its brim,
And up from the horizon dim
Leads His bright morning waves again.

—*Susan Coolidge.*

July 3.

THIS summer, whether you tarry at home or go into the country, arm yourself against temptation. The grace of God is the only safe shelter, whether in town or country. There are watering places

accessible to all of us. You cannot open a book of the Bible without finding out some such watering place. Fountains open for sin and uncleanliness; wells of salvation; streams from Lebanon; a flood struck out of the rock by Moses; fountains in the wilderness discovered by Hagar; water to drink and water to bathe in; the river of God, which is full of water; water of which if a man drink he shall never thirst; wells of water in the valley of Baca; living fountains of water; a pure river of water, as clear as crystal, from under the throne of God. These are watering places accessible to all of us. We do not have a laborious packing up before we start—only the throwing away of our transgressions. No expensive hotel bills to pay; it is "without money and without price." No long and dirty travel before we get there; it is only one step away. In California in five minutes I walked around and saw ten fountains, all bubbling up, and they were all different. And in five minutes you may in this Bible find fifty bright, sparkling fountains bubbling up into eternal life.—*T. De Witt Talmage, D.D.*

July 4.

O MAKE Thou us, through centuries long,
In peace secure, in justice strong;
Around our gift of freedom draw
The safeguards of Thy righteous law
And, cast in some diviner mold,
Let the new cycle shame the old!

—*Whittier.*

THE kingdom has always come through the faith of the consecrated few. Great institutions and organizations have nearly always come to plant themselves squarely across the march of the divine purposes. By the consecration of single souls, and small groups of souls, has righteousness been increasing with the ages. By the few listening spirits have God's great thoughts been spoken; and the few obedient lives have wrought the heavenly doing of His will in the earth's epochal hours. The race has entered its holier eras of wider freedom and purer justice at the heels of humble and patient souls whom it scoffed while it followed. It is the majesty of simple goodness in single characters that reveals God in converting and conquering power to the world.—*Rev. George D. Herron.*

IT is the man who is the missionary; it is not his words. His character is his message.—*Drummond.*

July 5.

ALL day fierce heat had held the quivering earth
In iron grip. The sky from red to pale
Had turned with fear; and white and still
The clouds had crept away in masses to the north.
The meadow hazels, 'neath their clustered load
Of satin and green-ruffled nuts, had dropped.
Sweet ferns had knelt to die; and choked and mute
Since morn had lain the cricket, hid below
The fallen spear of water flags. In dumb
Amaze the patient cattle to their bars
Had crowded, waiting help. All nature gasped;
All life seemed sinking into death!

Then rose,
In distant sunset depths, a solemn sound—
The wheels of God's great chariot, rolling slow!
An instant more, and with sharp blaze and boom,
His signal guns lit up and shook the sky,
With word of succor on the way! and then
The still, small voice of rain, in which He was,
And cooled and lulled His fainting world to sleep.
. . . . O iron-handed grief, which holds my soul
In searing grasp, and leaves my stifled days
No voice, no life! Will there a sound of help
Arise in sunset depths for me? Does God
Remember? Will His chariot wheels draw near?
Will He command this cloud to break in rain
Of healing tears? And will He give to me
At last, as unto His beloved, sleep?

—*Anon.*

THE course of life is a thousand trifles, then some crisis, and again a thousand trifles and a crisis; nothing but green leaves under common sun and shadow, and then a storm or a rare summer day. And far more than the storm or the perfect day the common sun and common shadow do to make the autumn rich. It is the "every days" that count. They must be made to tell, or the years have failed.

—*Rev. W. C. Gannett.*

July 6.

"I SAY there are two ways of growing old. And growing old ain't always growing ugly. Some folks grow old from the inside out, and some from the outside in. There's old furniture, and there's growing trees!"—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

ONCE on a time a man oppressed with grief,
A man that ever wavered,
Hanging 'twixt hope and fear,
Laid himself down in prayer
Before the altar in a church,
And thus he thought and said,
"Did I but know I should hold on unto the end."
And, as he prayed, he heard a holy voice within him say,
"If you knew it,
What would you do?
Do now just what you would resolve to do,
And then you will be safe."
Forthwith, consoled and strengthened,
He gave himself unto the will of God,
And all his anxious wavering ceased.
No curious wish had he
To know what should befall him afterward,
But he rather tried to find,
As he began and as he ended any action that was good,
The acceptable and perfect will of God.

—*Thomas à Kempis.*

IN the blackest soils grow the richest flowers, and the loftiest and strongest trees spring heavenward among the rocks.—*J. G. Holland.*

July 7.

Is there any reason why our lives should be feeble and stagnant and worthless? Is there any reason why we should not overcome temptation and endure trial and work the works of God in the world, and come at last to the height of His abode in heaven? Only one—that we do not know Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or

think, according to the power that worketh in us. Lay hold on Him by faith, and all things are possible. Let us clasp the hand of Christ and climb; and as we climb He will lift us out of sin, out of selfishness, out of weakness, out of death, into holiness, into love, into strength, into life, and we shall know the power of His resurrection.

—*Henry Van Dyke, D.D.*

THE boats lay stranded on the beach,
Tangled with seaweed, dank and green;
A desolate and dreary scene,
Far as the eye could reach;
The tide was out.

How changed the view when day was done,
The boats rode gayly on the deep,
Their white sails nodding as in sleep,
Kissed by the setting sun;
The tide was in.

Thus many a life, in want or woe,
Lies stranded on a barren shore;
But God is God for evermore;
Take courage, for we know
The tide comes in.

And, lifted from the rocks and shoals,
We sail upon a sunlit sea;
Night opens on eternity—
Sweet rest for weary souls—
The tide is in.

—*Sarah K. Bolton.*

July 8.

WHAT the Bible brings to you will depend in a large measure on what you bring to it. You may have a crumb, or a loaf, or a granary full to bursting, just as you choose.—*A. J. F. Behrends, D.D.*

NEVER once was He gently led. He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. He was led by men filled with wrath to the brow of the hill, that they might cast Him down headlong. He was led away to Annas; led away to Caiaphas; led into the council of the elders and chief priests and scribes; led to Pontius Pilate, and into the hall of judgment. And then, He, our Lord Jesus Christ, was led as a sheep to the slaughter; led away to be crucified! Verily, "His way was rougher and darker than mine."—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

SAD would the salt waves be,
And cold the singing sea,
And dark the gulfs that echo to the seven-stringed lyre,
If things were what they seem,
If life had no fair dream,
No mirage made to tip the dull sea line with fire.
—*Edmund William Gosse.*

July 9.

THE little basket, carried up among the hills, furnished beneath the hand of Christ an ample feast. And no less a marvel does God work with all the pure in heart who go up into the lonely place to meet Him. Let them have but the poorest pilgrim's unleavened cake of sincerity and faith; and when they have spread their insufficiency before God, and broken it into its worthlessness for His blessing to enter, they shall return richer than they came and gather more than they had brought. The smallest spiritual store, taken into the most retired spot, has

a self-multiplying power, and if only used with holy trust, will pass the dimensions of nature and betray the resources of the Infinite.—*James Martineau.*

BUT thou shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountains, and beneath the clouds
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores,
And mountain crags; so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself.
Great universal Teacher! He shall mold
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

—*S. T. Coleridge.*

July 10.

HAD God sent the earth spinning in its orbit with its axis perpendicular to the plane of its annual revolution, we should have had an arctic waste and a tropic exuberance, but no summer. It was this slight inclination of the earth to the plane of its orbit that gave to the world, which was to be man's home, its shifting seasons, including those days of warmth cut off by returning cold which constitute his summer. It is by His summer that the Almighty at once supplies His creatures, and teaches them their dependence. Students of the markets of the world tell us that before the sickle is thrust into the now ripening harvest, the race of man is within ninety days of starvation. But in all the history of mankind that summer supply has never failed. It is

by the constitution of summer that man's life has been rendered forever contingent, it is by the power and goodness of God revealed in summer that man's life has been forever secure. As in the wilderness God never sent two days' supply of manna any one morning, except for the weekly rest, so in no year does He send a food supply which can be heaped up for the necessities of many years. By the summer's abundance we are taught God's goodness, by its brevity our dependence; by the two we are made at once grateful and humble. What more does the soul need for its discipline?

—*Interior.*

COME with thy darkness to the healing Light,
Come with thy bitter which shall be made sweet,
And lay thy soil beside the lilies white,
At His dear feet!

—*Susan Coolidge.*

July 11.

ONE day a drop of water lay in a pool on the city street. It was stained and soiled. But, looking up, it saw the blue sky and the pure heavens and the white sunbeams dancing everywhere, and began to long for purity and for a nobler, worthier life. It looked up into the sky, and its longing became an earnest prayer to be made clean and beautiful. And its prayer was heard. Presently the little soiled drop was lifted up out of the gutter into the air—higher and higher. Then the breeze caught it, and it was wafted away, away, and by and by it

rested in the bosom of a rose, a drop of pure, crystal dew. So God answers our prayers for holiness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

"I SAW the lightning's gleaming rod
Reach forth and write on heaven's scroll
The awful autograph of God."

July 12.

WHEN men do anything for God, the very least thing, they never know where it will end, nor what amount of work it will do for Him. Love's secret, therefore, is to be always doing things for God, and not to mind because they are very little ones.

—*F. W. Faber.*

"UNTO the hills I lift mine eyes,"
And following them I seek the skies
To which they point and seem to say,
"*Christ* is our strength by night as day."

I take the lesson to my heart.
Dear Lord, let me not grow apart
From that sweet faith which bids hope rise
And like those mountains seek the skies,
Where Thou dost dwell in all Thy might,
To guard Thy people day and night.

"Unto the hills," yes, unto Thee,
Mine eyes shall turn most hopefully;
For hills and walls shall crumble, Lord,
But they who rest upon Thy word
Shall stand secure, and know Thee true,
Though skies of life be gray or blue.

—*Anon.*

July 13.

SHE was just then in the state of mind that people are in when you hear them say, "I can forgive, but I never can forget;" a sort of forgiveness, let me tell you, that isn't worth the name. It is base coin; and whenever you feel in that way toward anybody, you may as well take a long breath, and think seriously before you say the "forgive us our trespasses" in the Lord's Prayer.—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

OUR answered prayers are precious to us; I sometimes think our unanswered prayers are more precious still. Those give us God's blessings; these, if we will, may lead us to God. Do not let any moment of your life fail of God's light. Be sure that, whether He speaks or is silent, He is always loving you and always trying to make your life more rich and good and happy. Only be sure that you are always ready!—*Phillips Brooks.*

July 14.

THEN welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe.
—*Robert Browning.*

To the thoughtful mind the lily blossom is a wicket in the great, unseen portal of death, through which we may obtain bright glimpses of what is beyond. It opens in all its snowy purity and

exquisite grace from the dry, withered sheaf, as the transfigured immortal life bursts from the temporary imprisonment of death. And if the death of the plant should thus blossom into undreamt-of beauty, what infinite possibilities better than our brightest hopes are held by that darkness which bounds our vision here! He who raises up the lilies every summer, each from its own root in the mold, will not leave our life in the dust.—*Hugh MacMillan.*

July 15.

IF his dark nights are as bright as the world's days, what shall his days be? If even his starlight is more splendid than the sun, what must his sunlight be? If he can praise the Lord in the fires, how will he extol Him before the eternal throne? If evil be good to him *now*, what will the overflowing goodness of God be to him *then?* O, blessed "afterward!" Who would not be a Christian? Who would not bear the present cross for the crown which cometh afterward? But herein is work for patience, for the rest is not for to-day, nor the triumph for the present, but "afterward." Wait, O soul, and let patience have her perfect work!

—*Spurgeon.*

WITHIN this leaf, to every eye
So little worth, doth hidden lie
Most rare and subtle fragrancy;
Wouldst thou its secret strength unbind?
Crush it, and thou shalt perfume find
Sweet as Arabia's spicy wind.

In this dull stone, so poor and bare
Of shape and luster, patient care
Will find for thee a jewel rare.
But first must skillful hands essay,
With file and flint, to clear away
The film which hides its fire from day.

This leaf? this stone? It is thy heart;
It must be crushed by pain and smart,
It must be cleansed by sorrow's art,
Ere it will yield a fragrance sweet,
Ere it will shine, a jewel meet
To lay before thy dear Lord's feet.

—*S. Wilberforce.*

July 16.

WHEN our first parent was placed in Eden God said nothing to him about clearing away the weeds and nettles; there was no Dutch hoe put into his hand, for as yet the soil was clean, and the first gardener's instructions were simply to dress the garden and keep it. It is very different work now. Everywhere weeds and noxious growths of all kinds prevail, and before a man can sow his seeds and plant his flowers there is much stiff and unattractive labor in preparing the ground for them. This negative work may not make any show, it may call forth little admiration and applause, but it is essential. A friend once called upon Michael Angelo in his studio, while he was at work upon a statue. Some weeks later he called again, and found the great sculptor still engaged on the same marble figure. "Why, you have done nothing to this statue since

I saw it some weeks ago!" "O, yes," replied the incomparable genius, "I have; I have removed the blemish from that limb, and taken away the hard expression from that eye, and corrected the defect in that muscle." Well, it was only negative work, but it was indispensable to a successful result.

—*Thain Davidson, D.D.*

July 17.

THE possible stands by us ever fresh,
Fairer than aught which any life hath owned.

—*Jean Ingelow.*

THE true question for a man to ask of his soul is not, "Am I fit to die?" but, "Am I worthy to live?"—not, "Am I thinking enough of death?" but, "Am I thinking enough of life?" For it is no counsel of easy-going carelessness that I am putting. I am not preaching to have less thought or care about death, and to leave the matter so. No; but that that thought, that care, that sense of a deep and awful mystery with which all look at death when they think of it, shall be transferred to life. Then, in that spirit, go forth, feeling each new day something of what it is to be alive—alive in God's great world, in the beginning of a life that is to live on forever! Do a strong manly or womanly part; accept the mercies that come, with a glad thankfulness; take hold of work and duty with a firm, hearty grip; in all life's intercourse, whether of home or of the world, fulfill a loving, helpful part. And then shall life go strengthening, greatening, all

the way; and there shall be no death, but only, some day, just as the laws of being bring it, a change, a passing on, and the unspoken word "to come up higher" into the next and finer stage of this wonderful *Life!*—*Rev. Brooke Herford.*

July 18.

"ALL the pool is black and grimy,
Green and slimy,
Foul with mud;
Nothing pure can ever blossom
On the bosom
Of this flood."

While I spoke my error found me;
All around me
On the flood
Were white water lilies, blooming
And perfuming,
In the mud.

—*Anon.*

THERE are several practical lessons in spiritual growth to be learned from the lilies. The first one is that the flower grows by the action of the vital principle within it. A bit of white marble is the same thing to-day that it was a century ago; there is no life there. But there is a subtle, mysterious agent or principle in the lily, which slowly lifts it from the earth, and expands into an exquisite cup of white and gold. Life is never self-produced. The first lily was created by God; all the rest have been its propagated successors. Spiritual life is never self-originated. It begins with the entrance

of the Lord Jesus Christ into a converted soul; that is regeneration. He that hath the Son of God *hath life*. . . . Our only anxiety need be whether we really have Christ within us; but if sure of that, then we may dismiss anxiety just as the lilies do, and grow just as they grow, without any worry. Some Christians distress themselves needlessly. We are not required to furnish the *growing power;* the Spirit of Christ furnishes that.—*Theodore Cuyler, D.D.*

MY blind eyes cannot see
What is so clear to Thee;
Lord, make it clear to me!
—*Anna B. Warner.*

July 19.

THERE are no moral blanks; there are no neutral characters. We are either the sower that sows and corrupts, or the light that splendidly illuminates and the salt that silently operates; but, being dead or alive, every man speaks.—*Chalmers.*

ARE you longing for service and waiting for some opportunity to prove that you are in earnest in working for the Lord? "Be filled with the Spirit." If the lamp be burning, be sure the light is serving. Let the High Priest of the sanctuary move it where He will. There can be no ministry acceptable to God but that which is prompted by love to Him. It is heart ministry that He loves, and that is manifest in His sight, however it may be hidden for a time from others. The lamp ever burning in His temple is His care.—*Anna Shipton.*

July 20.

STILL alway groweth in me the great wonder,
When all the fields are blushing like the dawn,
And only one poor little flower plowed under,
That I can see no flowers, that one being gone,
No flowers at all because of that one gone.

I cannot feel the beauty of the roses,
Their soft leaves seem to me but layers of dust;
Out of my opening hand each blessing closes;
Nothing is left to me but hope and trust,
Nothing but heavenly hope and heavenly trust.

I know our Father must be good, not evil,
And murmur not, for faith's sake, at my ill;
Nor at the mystery of the working cavil,
That somehow bindeth all things to His will,
And, though He slay me, makes me trust Him still.

—Alice Cary.

July 21.

SOME men are so excessively acute at detecting imperfections that they scarcely notice excellences. In looking at a peacock's train they would fix on every spot where the feathers were worn, or the colors faded, and see nothing else.

—Archbishop Whately.

ASCETICISM is a running away from manful moral conflict. It is bad for the body, which is made for right joys. It is bad for the mind, which needs relaxation. It issues often in calamity to the spiritual nature. Nor is it necessary as a discipline; for this world is hard enough at best, has pain enough, heartache enough, trouble enough. The right and pure use of every good gift of God, and the real

self-denial involved in unselfishness, nobility of character, and bravest, truest thought—these should take the place so long usurped by the artificial self-denial and discipline of asceticism.

—David Nelson Beach, D.D.

WHILE yet thy days are long,
And this fair change of seasons passes slow,
Gather and treasure up the good they yield.

—William Cullen Bryant.

July 22.

"GIVING up" implies a conflict of wills. Say rather giving—such a full, glad, complete surrender of yourself, soul, body, and spirit, that there can be no giving up, because no conflict between you, but perfect harmony of desire, since your Father seeks only your good, and you seek only to know His wishes. You need not spend your life in a constant weighing of duties, and struggling against desires to disobey. This is a hard life—the life not of a child, but a servant. Walk with your Father, and you will know you are in the right way; if you have any doubts about His wishes, ask Him; He will tell you. But do not expect your whole nature to be changed so that you may have with the inexperience of youth the results of a lifetime of discipline. "Pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks." A heart that constantly turns heavenward for guidance, and utters its silent thanksgiving for every good, will not be seriously burdened by doubts, or oppressed by a sense of condemnation.

—Emily Huntington Miller.

July 23.

How many sheep are straying,
Lost from the Saviour's fold!
Upon the lonely mountains
They shiver with the cold.
Within the tangled thickets,
Where poison vines do creep,
And over rocky ledges
Wander the poor lost sheep.

. . . . . .

Say, will *you* seek to find them?
From pleasant bowers of ease
Will you go forth, determined
To find the "least of these?"—*E. H. Gates.*

I REMEMBER once, in Suda Bay, watching the searching beams of the electric light, thrown from one of the flagships of the international fleet, as it swept over a rocky coast, and down into the narrow creeks and secret crannies of the land, and over the broad waste of intervening waves—how suddenly, instead of the uniform pall of darkness shrouding all things, all things, the next minute, seemed pitilessly exposed. We need such a light in spiritual things, to see the true meaning and aspect of life. Reality is the greatest of great things. We are clever self-deceivers, we need to know. The Light of lights is God's revealing Spirit.

—*Canon Knox-Little.*

July 24.

THOUGH inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither.

—*Wordsworth.*

HOPE never hurt anyone, never yet interfered with duty; nay, always strengthens to the performance of duty, gives courage, and clears the judgment. Saint Paul says, "We are saved by hope."

—*George Macdonald.*

CHRIST simply places Himself by our side, and shows us a perfect life, God's life on earth in man; and He says, "You are to be saints and heroes, every one of you, in the only true sense, just where you are. That is the reason why I have come to you where you are." He uses no compulsion, no violence. He does not put His power in the place of your liberty. Whoever lives the heroic or saintly life will do it of his own choice, his free will. There is no manhood, womanhood, character, otherwise.

—*Bishop Huntington.*

July 25.

SAY not, I have a soul; I *am* a soul,
And have a body builded for my need,
That I, a soul, may in this great world-school
Study the Master's works. My earthly house
Has wondrous windows; mimic galleries lead
Divinest sounds to me—deep lessons spelled
By loving lips, and vast world-melodies.
I am a soul, set in a sphere compact
Of transient elements.
Of these, a little handful serves for home,
For medium of touch 'twixt me and earth,
The while I stay—gives fire and food and rest.
Shall the base stuff strike into me a stain,
Leave pungent earthy odor? Soul of all,
Attract me, lest the body should
Transcend a dwelling's use!

—*Mary F. Butts.*

To be misunderstood even by those whom one loves is the cross and bitterness of life. It is the secret of that sad and melancholy smile on the lips of great men which so few understand; it is the cruelest trial reserved for self-devotion; it is what must have oftenest wrung the heart of the Son of man; and if God could suffer, it would be the wound we should be forever inflicting upon Him. He also —He above all—is the great misunderstood, the least comprehended. Alas! alas! Never to tire, never to grow cold; to be patient, sympathetic, tender; to look for the budding flower and the opening heart; to hope always, like God; to love always—this is duty.—*Amiel.*

July 26.

THERE are no disappointments, it has been said, to those whose wills are bound up in the will of God.—*Anon.*

A CERTAIN great purpose, fiery, true, is the one thing which will burn out all the lower and inferior purposes of life. One of the indispensable things in a man's career, one of the strongest forces in Gideon's career, one of the great energies in the career of these noble three hundred, was that faculty called imagination. If you have no fancy, you won't see any facts. It is supposed oftentimes that facts and fancies are opposed, and that the man of imagination has no ability to deal with facts; but the man without imagination is a man without an eye.

And the strongest man is the man of the three hundred who sees most of the opportunities and privileges of life. He is bewildered with his pictured openings for labor. Why, he can do ten thousand things. That blind, dull fellow yonder sees nothing to be done. This man looks at these privileges and opportunities, but he must take his choice. The man of imagination is likely constantly to be beset with inferior tasks. Small opportunities are likely to drown the great opportunity; and the river of life, up which there may go mighty boats—the cartage of a whole realm—may run out into little streams, here, there, and everywhere, and no boat can ascend or descend because of the narrowness, because of the superficialness, of the stream.

—*F. W. Gunsaulus, D.D.*

July 27.

LORD, I have laid my heart upon Thy altar,
But I cannot get the wood to burn;
It hardly flames ere it begins to falter,
And to the dark return.

Old sap, or night-fallen dew, has dampened the fuel;
In vain my breath would flame provoke.
Yet, see! at every poor attempt's renewal,
To Thee ascends the smoke.

'Tis all I have—smoke, failure, foiled endeavor,
Coldness and doubt and palsied lack;
Such as I have I send Thee, perfect Giver—
Send Thou Thy lightning back!

—*George Macdonald.*

YOUR sacrifice is burning on the altar, and all around you the temple of life is filled with smoke, and no light comes in through the windows, and the very walls you cannot see, but you know where you are; for as long as you suffer you are nigh the altar. That you know, and by that knowledge hold fast. Be quiet, fear not; and be you sure that, when the sacrifice is over, one after the other the windows that open into the infinite—faith and hope—will show themselves, and the air about you will be the clearer and the sweeter for having been so darkened a while.—*William Mountford.*

July 28.

O SHAPES and hues, dim beckoning, through
Yon mountain gaps, my longing view
Beyond the purple and the blue,
To stiller sea and greener land,
And softer lights and airs more bland,
And skies—the hollow of God's hand.

—*Whittier.*

A WOMAN dreamed a dream that she says dominated her life and turned all its bitter channels into sweetness. She dreamed that, one of a crowd, she stood in an open green, young, joyous. As she looked forth she beheld a way narrow, steep, rugged, hemmed in like a canyon. It led always uphill and was carpeted thick with Scotch thistles and the needles of the thorn tree. A voice full of imperativeness said to her, "Yon is your way of life. Walk in it." She cowered and shrank and refused. She

said, "No human feet could tread those thistles and not bleed. No human strength can always climb a rugged, thorny path—I should faint and bleed and die." Sternly the voice said, "It is the path marked out for *you*. Go in it." So she went, and in a few paces were the stones and briers. But, behold, when she put out her foot, a little boy, like an angel, whipped in before her and began to clear away space for one foot, then for another foot, and so on —never more than one step at a time. At last she turned to see how far she had gone, and there, standing at the beginning of the path, was the Saviour, and she saw Him pointing to the boy just where to brush away for her foot.—*Union Signal.*

July 29.

SOME women crown Love with a band of gold,
A ring that circles home and household fires;
Familiar tick of clock and cricket choirs,
Tea-table talk, and cheery chat 'twill hold—
The ring that doth a sweet small home infold.
At Hymen's mart these women are the buyers
Of simple joys of which wisdom ne'er tires—
Contented, happy there when all is told.

Then others crown Love with the horizon's rings;
The sun marks time for these. Great Duty calls
These to be up and doing at her word—
Their harmonies, the songs all Nature sings;
Their home and hearth, all Nature's mighty halls;
Their master word, the Word of Risen Lord!

—*Martha Young.*

GOD makes crosses of great variety; He makes some of iron and lead that look as if they must crush; some of straw that seem so light, and yet

are no less difficult to carry; some He makes of gold and precious stones that dazzle the eye and excite the envy of the spectators, but in reality are as well able to crucify as those which are so much dreaded.—*Fénelon.*

IF you fear,
Cast all your care on God; that anchor holds.
—*Tennyson.*

July 30.

THAT is what we are put into the world for—to help one another. You can pass on the kindness by serving my good friends, who, in return, will do their best for you.—*Louisa M. Alcott.*

JESUS CHRIST calls you to happiness not through self-indulgence, but through self-sacrifice. The cross that He bears He bids you bear; the suffering He took for love's sake He lays on you, or asks you rather to lay upon yourself. There is higher happiness than indulgence of self; it is sacrifice of self for the sake of love. Is there any happiness in this world of ours like the delicious happiness of a mother? Is there any sorrow in this world of ours like the exquisite sorrow of a mother? In this strange symphony of our human life the minor and the major key are twined together, and life passes from the one to the other with transition so rapid as to be bewildering. Did you ever think that the highest expression of joy is a tear, and the highest expression of sorrow is a tear?

—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*

July 31.

ROLL round, strange years; swift seasons, come and go,
Ye leave upon us but an outward sign;
Ye cannot touch the inward and divine
Which God alone doth know.

—*Dinah Mulock Craik.*

BE in earnest in cultivating a Christlike character. Half-and-half Christians, like a great many of us, are of no use either to God or to men or to themselves. Dawdling and languid, braced up and informed by no earnestness of purpose, and never having had enthusiasm enough to set themselves fairly aright, they do no good and they come to nothing. "I would thou wert cold or hot." You will never grow like Christ unless you are in earnest about it, any more than you could pierce a tunnel through the Alps with a straw. It needs an iron bar tipped with diamond to do it. Unless your whole being is engaged in the task and you gather your whole self together into a point, and drive the point with all your force, you will never get through the rock barrier that rises between you and the fair lands beyond. Be in earnest, or give it up altogether.—*Alex. Maclaren, D.D.*

August.

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ALONG the roadside, like the flowers of gold
The tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod;
And the red pennons of the cardinal flowers
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,
Wing-weary with its long flight from the south,
Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf
With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,
Confesses it. The locust by the wall
Stabs the noon silence with his sharp alarm.
A single hay cart down the dusty road
Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep
On the load's top. Against the neighboring hill,
Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,
The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift still
Defied the Dog Star. Through the open door
A drowsy smell of flowers—gray heliotrope,
And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette—
Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends
To the pervading symphony of peace.

—*Whittier.*

EIGHTH MONTH.

WHEN come the sultry days and sultrier nights of August, can you not hear the voice of the sea calling? — the ocean with its ever-changing moods: a rich dark blue as it mirrors a cloudless sky; a gleaming pearly hue as light clouds scud by; greenish-gray when the south wind ruffles its surface; pink-tinted at sunset, and glittering like molten silver in moonlit nights; a heaving leaden mass, white-capped, with waves breaking in huge billows of foam at the base of the grim rocks when the sky is hidden by storm clouds and the gulls fly low near the shore; and black with mist and rain when the northeast gale sweeps in, dashing the briny spray into the turbulent air and against the centuries-old cliffs with terrifying force. "The sea is His: He made it." O, the wonderful depth and beauty of the meaning of life as revealed to us beside the unresting sea! Petty cares and worries shrivel and drop away; only the essentials, the large things, are manifest. Our narrow horizon widens unconsciously. "The sea is His: He made it." *We* are His: He made *us!* Vacation days are not in vain if one comes face to face with his own soul therein, and begins to comprehend in some measure its limitations and its possibilities.

August 1.

In ripening summer the full laden vales
Give prospect of employment for the flails.

—*Thomson.*

THERE is somewhere on our coast a fountain within high-water mark on the seashore. Twice a day the tide spreads over it, and the pure, sweet water is defiled and spoiled by the salt, bitter wave. But the tide goes down, and the fountain washes itself clear from the defilement. As that troubled sea goes down, once more the fountain gushes pure and sweet beneath the pure, sweet heavens. This is the emblem of a life that is in daily conflict with the world and with adverse circumstances. Again and again it is overpowered by those perplexing circumstances and tumultuous voices, but these all subside and the soul is left alone with God.

—*F. Arnold.*

CALMLY I rest in this life's evening hour,
Regretful only for so little done
For human ills, and Him whose kindly power
Brings me so late to mark life's sinking sun.

Soon I shall sleep that sleep that knows no waking,
And quiet rest through all the summer's bloom,
Waiting the trump whose blast, all nature shaking,
Shall bring a birthday from the opening tomb.

—*Mark Trafton, D.D*

August 2.

THAT is one of the wonderful things about the Lord, that we never get to the end of Him. We can *go on* to know the Lord. The Lord is the way, but He is a long way, a road we can never come to the

end of. . . . If, when first coming to some appreciation of the Lord, we had looked at the matter and felt of it, we should have found that it was not a wall to bar our further progress, but that it was set upon hinges, would play backward and forward; in fact, was a gate conveniently adjusted for us to go *through*. That is the kind of way Christ is. *From* faith *to* faith. *From* glory *to* glory. Tents, not houses; pilgrimages, not citizenship. We need not to be afraid of advanced positions. The Lord will never wear out. We are afraid to know more than so much of a person for fear we will reach bottom. Boats are wrecked by striking ground where it is shoaling up on to dry land. And that is just the difference between the human and the divine; the divine has no shoals, no beach. We can go on to know the Lord, and no need of slowing in a fog or dropping our lead. And it is so of whatever things the Lord has a part in; they run out into infinitude, have no edges, no outermost rim.

—*Dr. C. H. Parkhurst.*

August 3.

MEN wondered why, in August heat,
The little brook with music sweet
Could glide along the dusty way,
When all else parched and silent lay.

Few stopped to think how, every morn,
The sparkling stream anew was born
In some moss-circled, mountain pool,
Forever sweet and clear and cool.

A life that, ever calm and glad,
One melody and message had.
"How keeps it so," men asked, "when I
Must change with every changing sky?"

Ah! if men knew the secret power
That gladdens every day and hour,
Would they not change to song life's care,
By drinking at the fount of prayer?

—*James Buckham.*

LEISURE misused, an idle hour waiting to be employed, idle hands with no occupation, idle and empty minds with nothing to think of—these are the main temptations to evil. Fill up that empty void, employ those vacant hours, occupy those listless hands, and evil will depart because it has no place to enter in, because it is conquered by good.

—*Dean Stanley.*

August 4.

MANY of you, nay, most of you, know full well what it is to have a sepulcher in the garden of your lives. You know the shadow that it sheds over all the pleasant alleys and the bordered paths. You need not be told how it changes the place for you into something other than it was. But there is another aspect. Not a spot in all the inclosure brought to Joseph of Arimathea so enduring joy as the very place he had builded for sorrow. And the sepulcher in your garden may do the same for you. It may be a resurrection spot for your soul. Out of this sorrow which wraps you round, you may rise into a purer and serener day. The rolling of the

great stone to the door may mark the finishing and hiding away of one portion of your Christian life; and the rolling of that stone away on the third morning may be the commencement of a higher and more consecrated one. And if this be the case, then the sepulcher spot in your days will be the most blessed of all. Its joy will reach farther, shine clearer, endure longer, than any belonging to the hours when your garden knew no tomb. Using your sorrow aright, it may teach you, as it has taught many, how to say—

"O deem not they are blest alone
Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep;
For God, who pities man, hath shown
A blessing for the eyes that weep."

—*Dr. G. L. Walker.*

August 5.

WHAT, stand with slackened hands and fallen heart over the littleness of your service! Too little, is it, to be perfect in it? Would you, then, if you were Master, risk a greater treasure in the hands of such a man? O, there is no man, no woman, so small that they cannot make their life great by high endeavor. . . . This is the beginning of all Gospels—that the kingdom of heaven is at hand just where *we* are.—*William C. Gannett.*

THERE is sultry gloom on the mountain brow,
And a sultry glow beneath.
O, for a breeze from the western sea,
Soft and reviving, sweet and free,
Over the shadowless hill and lea,
Over the barren heath.

There are clouds and darkness around God's ways,
And the noon of life grows hot;
And though His faithfulness standeth fast
As the mighty mountains, a shroud is cast
Over its glory, solemn and vast,
Veiling, but changing it not.

Send a sweet breeze from Thy sea, O Lord,
From Thy deep, deep sea of love;
Though it lift not the veil from the cloudy height,
Let the brow grow cool and the footstep light,
As it comes with holy and soothing might,
Like the wing of a snowy dove.

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

August 6.

THERE are sweet surprises awaiting many a humble soul fighting against great odds in the battle of a seemingly commonplace life.—*Anon.*

HAVE you never stood by some arm of the sea which penetrates far inland, and seen its emptiness and ugliness? There is only the oozy, miry bed of the creek; the blue line of ocean is far away on the horizon. There is no human power by which it can be filled with water. The little streams from the hillsides could never fill the thousand empty indentations in our coast. But the great unquiet ocean begins to creep in. It spreads slowly over the flat bottom, and winds into every bend of the shore, and fills every crevice of the rocks; it covers the long grasses, it drives you back step by step; it surges in, lifting itself with quiet strength, until the little gulf is filled to the brim, and the bowing billows come

over the surface, and the ships are lifted from their beds and sail away to their appointed havens. The inlet is full; it is filled with all the fullness of the ocean, and with its mighty power. So we are empty till we are filled with the power of God. The toils and sacrifices and duties of life seem too heavy for us, but when inspirations from God begin to come in upon us, when His love rises in our hearts, with His grace and inexhaustible power behind it, we can carry all burdens buoyant upon such a strength, and can feel an undercurrent of divine power filling our hearts.—*George Harris.*

August 7.

SOME people's lives are like complementary colors . . . they see blue, and live red.—*Mrs. Whitney.*

'TIS true that when the dust of death has choked
A great man's voice, the common words he spoke
Turn oracles; the common thoughts he yoked
Like horses, draw like griffins.
—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

GOOD deeds can never die. Death has no dominion over them. He who performs them wins for himself the power of endless life. However obscure, however ignoble he may be, however humble his service, he has opened a fountain whose waters fail not. Like Alcæus, which from its native isle flowed through the salt sea fresh and sweet, and bubbled up in the higher and wider lands of the continent, so does this deed of yours, this act of faith and

grace and love, flow from this little islet of time under the salt sea of death and break forth in brightness and refreshment on the boundless highlands of eternity.—*Bishop Gilbert Haven.*

August 8.

O LILIES, upturned lilies,
How swift their prisoned rays
To smite with fire from heaven
The fainting August days!
Tall urns of blinding beauty,
As vestals pure they hold—
In each a blaze of scarlet
Half blotted out with gold.

—*Elaine Goodale.*

I HEAR men praying everywhere for more faith, but when I listen to them carefully and get at the real heart of their prayers, very often it is not more faith at all that they are wanting, but a change from faith to sight. "What shall I do with this sorrow that God has sent me?" "Take it up and bear it, and get a strength and blessing out of it." "Ah, if I only knew what blessing there was in it, if I saw how it would help me, then I could bear it like a plume!" "What shall I do with this hard, hateful duty which Christ has laid right in my way?" "Do it, and grow by doing it." "Ah, yes; if I could only see that it would make me grow." In both these cases do you not see that what you are begging for is not more faith, although you think it is, but sight. You want to see for yourself the blessing in the sorrow, the strength in the hard and

hateful task. Faith says not, "I see that it is good for me, and so God must have sent it," but, "God sent it, and so it must be good for me." Faith walking in the dark with God only prays Him to clasp its hand more closely; does not even ask Him for the lifting of the darkness so that the man may find the way himself.—*Phillips Brooks.*

August 9.

THE storm sits at the organ,
Whose dusky pipes are trees,
And sweeps the leafy keyboard
As players sweep the keys
When groin'd roofs of cathedrals
Shake with the harmonies.

Play on, O wild musician!
Touch the responsive keys,
And make the huge pipes tremble
With ravishing melodies!
I feel the zealot's rapture,
I know his ecstasies!

What are the fanes and altars
That bow before Time's rod?
This is the grandest temple
That Levite ever trod—
This vast psalm best expresses
The majesty of God!

—*H. van Allen Ferguson.*

WE must always distinguish between our emotions and our attitude. The one may die off our lives like the sunset glory from the ridges of the Alps, that seem so gray and cold when it is gone; but

the other should resemble the changeless perpetuity of the everlasting hills, unaltered by the transitions of the ages, or the alternations of day and night. You may not always feel as happy, but you can always say "Yes" to the will of God, and realize your attitude in the risen, ascended, loving Jesus, among the thousand thousands that minister to Him. In moments of depression be sure to live in your will and His will.—*F. B. Meyer.*

August 10.

FROM sin and sorrow set us free,
And make Thy temples worthy Thee!
—*John Dryden.*

THE miracle of the straightening of the woman who was bent double has its gospel of precious hope for any who have failed to learn earlier the lesson of keeping straight. The bowed down may yet be lifted up. The curvature of eighteen years' growth and stiffening was cured in a moment. The woman who for so long had not been able to look up went away with her eyes upturned to God in praise. The same miracle Christ is able to work now upon souls that are bent, whether by sin, by sorrow, or by life's load of toil. He can undo sin's terrible work, and restore the divine image to the soul. He can give such comfort to the sad heart that eyes long downcast shall be lifted up to look upon God's face in loving submission and joy. He can put such songs into the hearts of the weary

and overwrought that the crooked form shall grow straight, and brightness shall come again into the tired face.—*Anon.*

August 11.

MASTER, help! From hour to hour,
Lord, I need Thy saving power—
Not to soothe to-morrow's woes,
Not to bless to-night's repose.
Now I hunger to be fed;
Give to-day Thy daily bread!

Every moment hold my hand;
Without Thee I cannot stand.
Show my foot the place to tread;
Step by step I must be led.
Go before me all the way;
Give me daily bread to-day! —*Rosie Terry Cooke.*

A CARPENTER who is at work on a lofty scaffold does not keep looking downward, measuring with his eye the distance to the earth, and imagining the dreadful consequences of a fall. If he did, he might soon become dizzy and lose his balance; but no, he goes quietly about his work, occupying his mind with its details without the thought of falling. It should be so with the Christian. He should not be constantly examining his own spiritual moods, but should engage heartily and steadily in Christian work.—*Edward Judson.*

August 12.

MEN said the old smith was foolishly careful as he wrought on the great chain he was making in his

dingy shop in the heart of the great city. But he heeded not their words and only wrought with greater painstaking. Link after link he fashioned, and at last the chain was finished and carried away. In time it lay coiled on the deck of a great ship which sped back and forth on the ocean. There seemed no use for it, for the great anchor was never needed and the chain lay there uncoiled. So years passed. But one night there was a terrible storm, and the ship was in sore peril of being hurled upon the rocks. Anchor after anchor was dropped, but none of them availed. The chains were broken like threads. At last the mighty sheet anchor was cast into the sea, and the old chain was quickly uncoiled and run out until it grew taut. All watched to see if it would bear the awful strain. It sang in the wild storm as the vessel's weight surged upon it. It was a moment of intense anxiety. The ship, with its cargo of a thousand lives, depended upon this one chain. What now if the old smith had wrought carelessly even on one link of his chain! But he had put honesty and truth and invincible strength into every part of it, and it stood the test, holding the ship in safety until the storm was over and the morning came.—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

August 13.

THERE is no mystery about happiness whatever. Put in the right ingredients, and it must come out. He that abideth in Him will bring forth much fruit;

and bringing forth much fruit is happiness. The infallible receipt for happiness, then, is to do good; and the infallible receipt for doing good is to abide in Christ. The surest proof that all this is a plain matter of cause and effect is that men may try every other conceivable way of finding happiness, and they will fail. Only the right cause in each case can produce the right effect.—*Henry Drummond.*

THE sky hangs close above the lawn—
A saffron gray, save where the crest
Of one huge, piling thundercloud
Shows black and sullen in the west.

. . . . . .

With heavy scents the air is filled;
The great, burnt roses in the dusk
Hang wilted heads and, dying, breathe
Their sweetest cinnamon and musk.

. . . . . .

The night grows blacker—far away
A sudden rumbling, hoarse and deep,
Stirs the faint blossoms on their stems,
And wakes the birds from fitful sleep.

A red shaft burns across the sky—
The lightning cleaves the dusk in twain;
A hush comes that is deep as death,
And then—ah! waiting earth—the rain.

—*Josette Gertrude Menard.*

August 14.

I HAVE a friend who was in the Crimean war; he told me that he had received a medal with Inkerman upon it—for that was his battle; but he said the most touching part of it all was the experience of a friend of his who fought at his side. A cannon ball took off one of his legs, but the brave fellow

sprang up immediately and, taking hold of a tree, drew his sword, and was ready to fight even to death. Immediately another cannon ball came crashing past and took off the other leg. They carried him, wounded, bleeding, and, as they supposed, dying, to the hospital. Strangely enough, he came back to life again, and when the day came for the awarding of medals they carried him upon his stretcher before her majesty, the queen. To the other soldiers she had simply given the medals by the hands of her secretary, but when she saw this man carried in on a stretcher, his face so thin and pale, she rose from her throne, stooped down by his side, and pinned with her own hands the medal upon his breast, while the tears fell like rain upon the face of the brave soldier.

Thus I trust it will be with many of us. We shall come into His presence, stand face to face with Him, and He will rise from His throne, coming forward to receive us, and as we look up into His face, thrones will vanish away and crowns will be as nothing, for to see Him with all His beauty will be the full reward.—*J. Wilbur Chapman, D.D.*

Go to the woods and hills! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.

—*Longfellow.*

August 15.

As soon as we lay ourselves entirely at His feet we have enough light given us to guide our own steps; as the foot soldier, who hears nothing of the

councils that determine the course of the great battle he is in, hears plainly enough the word of command which he must himself obey.—*George Eliot.*

JUST to be good
  This is enough—enough!
O, we who find sin's billows wild and rough,
Do we not feel how more than any gold
Would be the blameless life we led of old,
While yet our lips knew but a mother's kiss?
    Ah! though we miss
    All else but this,
      To be good is enough.

It is enough—
  Enough—just to be good!
To lift our hearts where they are understood;
To let the thirst for worldly power and place
Go unappeased; to smile back in God's face
With the glad lips our mother used to kiss.
    Ah! though we miss
    All else but this,
      To be good is enough.

—*James Whitcomb Riley.*

August 16.

HAS it ever occurred to you that God is more anxious to come near to you than you are to go to Him? Has it ever occurred to you that God has come—if I may use the phrase—ninety-nine hundredths of the way in His anxiety to meet you? Did not the Saviour leave His throne and embosom Himself in humanity? Did He not talk and live to give you a consciousness that God is near you? O, He came to be near and save you, and to take

away the veil! How beautiful the figure in which He represents Himself as saying: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in to him." Is not that enough? The great God stands at your heart and mine, and, gently tapping, as if by the fingers of His love, He calls, "Open, open, open," and His fullness is ready to enter in.—*Bishop Simpson.*

August 17.

LAUNCH out into the deep,
The awful depths of a world's despair;
Hearts that are breaking and eyes that weep,
Sorrow and ruin and death are there.
And the sea is wide, and the pitiless tide
Bears on its bosom away—away,
Beauty and youth in relentless ruth
To its dark abyss for aye—for aye.
But the Master's voice comes over the sea,
"Let down your nets for a draught" for Me!
He stands in our midst on our wreck-strewn strand,
And sweet and royal is His command.
His pleading call
Is to each—to all;
And wherever the royal call is heard,
These hang the nets of the royal word.
Trust to the nets and not to your skill,
Trust to the royal Master's will!
Let down your nets each day, each hour,
For the word of a King is a word of power,
And the King's own voice comes over the sea,
"Let down your nets for a draught" for Me!

—*Sunday Magazine.*

WE turn our minds to the parable of Lessing: "Once upon a time a certain king of a great realm built himself a palace, the most gorgeous that ever

had been planned, the wonder of the whole earth. A strife arose among certain connoisseurs as to some of the obscure ground plans upon which the palace was constructed. The conflict lasted through a great many years. While this conflict was going on, it happened upon a time that a watchman one night cried out, 'Fire!' And the architects began running hither and thither, each with his plan, squabbling as to whether the fire had broken out in this place, or whether it had broken out in that place, and as to what was the best spot to apply the engines. And its friends all took to wrangling. Alas! Alas, the beautiful palace will be burned! But it stood there; and presently they discovered that it was not on fire at all. Behind it there was an extraordinary display of northern lights, which shone through it with such brilliancy that the palace itself seemed to be full of flame." So we say, Let knowledge increase, let it run to and fro, let it light up the world all it will, it will only illuminate, because it cannot destroy, the city of our God.

—S. D. McConnell, D.D.

August 18.

"He touched her hand, and the fever left her."
O, we need His touch on our fevered hands!
The cool, still touch of the Man of sorrows,
Who knows us and loves us, and understands.
So many a life is one long fever!
A fever of anxious suspense and care,
A fever of getting, a fever of fretting,
A fever of hurrying here and there.

Ah! what if in winning the praise of others
We miss at the last the King's "Well done?"
If our self-sought tasks in the Master's vineyard
Yield "nothing but leaves" at the set of the sun?

Whatever the fever, His touch can heal it;
Whatever the tempest, His voice can still;
There is only joy as we seek His pleasure,
There is only rest as we choose His will.
And some day, after life's fitful fever,
I think we shall say, in the home on high,
"If the hands that He touched but did His bidding,
How little it matters what else went by!"

Ah, Lord! Thou knowest us altogether,
Each heart's sore sickness, whatever it be;
Touch Thou our hands! Let the fever leave us,
And so shall we minister unto Thee!

—*E. G. Cherry.*

August 19.

ONE of the best things that the revisers of the New Testament have done for us is to change some of the smaller words. They have taught us that Jesus said, "Where is *my* guest chamber?"—not yours, not another man's, not the room for all the travelers who came to Jerusalem at this season, but, "Where is *my* room at this house?" And the man shall show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there prepare the passover. Through all the centuries since, a great procession, never broken, has gone up those outer stairs, and come down richer and stronger for the hour they have spent with Him. . . . The world is not hostile to Christ. I wish it were. Hostility means life. Men are in-

different, and that is worse than opposition. We can sail the seas in the storm ; but what can we do in a fog? The world is preoccupied. Our time is all taken up. We are very busy. Our engagements are made, our life is invested. There seems little place to admit Him—to admit anyone who craves not merely entrance, but the large upper room. He has never lessened that demand—the large room, the upper room. The large room may be the palace hall or a narrow cell. The upper room may be one whose windows open toward Jerusalem, or a dungeon in the ground. It is the largest room we have, the largest and the highest room, where He may find His guest chamber. . . . O, man, where is the guest chamber in your life? Blessed are ye on this day if you open unto Him the large room, and keep with Him the passover that is the earnest of an everlasting rejoicing.

—*Alexander McKenzie, D.D.*

August 20.

YOU sunburned sickle men, of August weary,
Come hither from the furrow and be merry.

—*Shakespeare.*

WHEN God has raised you up, be sure to raise Him up in adoring love. When the brook of your mercy is full, let it flow out in music. Perhaps just now one of the more plaintive psalms befits you. But your time will come. There are joy days in all lives. . . . Note how gladly the psalmist recites

the name of God. It is as if he could not say it too often ; and all that Jehovah is is for himself. "O Lord, my God." Notice what God does for men. He heals them, He brings them up from Sheol, He keeps them alive, He loves to fill the soul with blessedness. The darkness is for a moment, the sunshine for a lifetime. Tears occupy but a small part of life, though we remember them most bitterly. There are fewer rainy days than sunny ones in the year. Weeping comes in to lodge in the evening, but in the morning she steals out by the back door, because Joy has come in at the front.—*The Christian.*

August 21.

IF broad daylight should never be yours on this side the grave, He will hold your feet in the twilight that they shall not stumble.—*F. W. Faber.*

I AM His creature, and His air
I breathe, where'er my feet may stand ;
The angel's song rings everywhere,
And all the earth is holy land.

—*Edward Rowland Sill.*

CONTENT may dwell in all stations. To be low, but above contempt, may be high enough to be happy. Rough diamonds are sometimes mistaken for pebbles ; and poverty may be rich in accomplishments which riches in vain desire. . . . The divine eye looks upon high and low differently from that of man. They who seem to stand upon Olympus and

high mounted unto our eyes, may be but in the valleys and low ground unto His; for He looks upon those as highest who nearest approach His divinity, and upon those as lowest who are farthest from it.—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

August 22.

I LOOK to Thee in every need, and never look in vain;
I feel Thy strong and tender love, and all is well again;
The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged in the work of life, disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures or its fears, I sink beside the road;
But let me only think of Thee,
And then new heart springs up in me.

Thy calmness bends serene above, my restlessness to still;
Around me flows Thy quickening life, to nerve my faltering will;
Thy presence fills my solitude;
Thy providence turns all to good. —*Anon.*

August 23.

WHAT should we do without the many blessings "common and beautiful as light and air?" Our "smooth green grasses" scarcely win a thought until travel leads us into arid plains, where the eye wearies of the stretch of sand and the scant vegetation. We eagerly import botanical novelties, while our roadside mullein must cross the seas ere it can wear the name of the American velvet plant. We long for Italian skies, forgetting that they won their reputation from English travelers who had previously

known only the murky, foggy atmosphere of their own misty isle. We fail to note the workings of divine Goodness until some striking manifestation causes us to exclaim over a "special providence," so blind are we to the unceasing watchfulness, the tender care of our heavenly Father in the little matters, the daily events of our lives. We need to follow the advice of a good old writer, who wisely counsels: "Let not the blessings we receive daily from God make us not to value or not to praise Him because they are common."—*Harper's Bazar.*

THE dial
Receives many shades, and each points to the sun.
The shadows are many, the sunlight is one.
Life's shadows fluctuate; God's love doth not,
And His love is unchanged when it changes our lot.
Looking up to this light which is common to all,
And down to these shadows on each side that fall,
In Time's silent circle, so various for each,
Is it nothing to know that they never can reach
So far, but that light lies beyond them forever?
—*Owen Meredith.*

August 24.

TAKE thy self-denials gayly and cheerfully, and let the sunshine of thy gladness fall on dark things and bright alike, like the sunshine of the Almighty.
—*James Freeman Clarke.*

YEA, out of pain and death His beauty springs,
And out of doubt a deathless confidence;
Though we are shod with leaden cares, our wings
Shall lift us yet out of our deep suspense.

Thou great Creator! Pardon us who reach
For other world beyond this world of Thine,
This matchless world, where Thy least touch doth teach
Thy solemn lessons clearly, line on line.

And help us to be grateful, we who live
Such sordid, fretful lives of discontent,
Nor see the sunshine nor the flower, nor strive
To find the love Thy bitter chastening meant.

—*Celia Thaxter.*

August 25.

To walk and live unseduced, within arm's length of what is not your own, with nothing between your desire and its gratification but the invisible law of rectitude—this is to be a man.

—*Horace Mann.*

THE secret of life—it is giving;
To minister and to serve;
Love's law binds the man to the angel,
And ruin befalls if we swerve.
There are breadths of celestial horizon
Overhanging the commonest way;
The clod and the star share the glory,
And to breathe is an ecstasy.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

WE cannot be still, cannot be at rest. It is the most natural and yet most ruinous fault which belongs to men in an age which lives too fast and has almost a morbid passion for incessant labor. O, men of little faith! . . . because you are forced to be outwardly inactive, do you think you also may not be, in your years of quiet, "about your Father's business?"—*Bishop Huntington.*

August 26.

HEAVEN has twelve gates. I may not enter where
The white-robed victors march from cross and pyre,
Nor yet with those in spotless sweet attire,
Who caught no taint from earth's sin-laden air.
I may not come with those who bravely bare
The crucifixion of their life's desire,
Or carried all their days embosomed fire,
Or battled with a black and fierce despair.
Nor great, nor noble, nor enduring, I;
No martyr, soldier, or enthusiast,
But one whose life, in peaceful habit fast,
Reflects God's love, as lakes reflect the sky.
O God, may I behold Thy face at last,
Among Thy children who lived duteously!

—*James Buckham.*

IT was a woman, Hannah More, who invented the phrase, "The logic of the life." It embodies a splendid truth. There are thousands of lives no incident in one of which can be used to illustrate any particular truth or assist in any particular cause, the sum total of each one of which is an unanswerable argument for the right. If no special passage in your life be so conspicuous as to arrest any man's attention, let your character, as a whole, make an impression for the truth. Let its weight, however little, press everyone it touches away from the wrong and into the right.—*Charles F. Deems, D.D.*

August 27.

THERE are isolated verses in the Old Testament which indicate that occasional prophets of Israel, in moments of supreme inspiration, experienced a momentary hope respecting the future; but these

isolated utterances are like gleams of sunshine breaking through a tempestuous sky, while the wind still sweeps through the skeleton trees, and the rain still falls in dreary torrents. There is not a patch of blue sky—no, not even in the Psalms of sanguine David or the visions of inspired Isaiah. Christ's resurrection brought life and immortality to light. It converted the fabric of a dream into an historic reality; it transformed a despairing hope into a calm assurance. To the believer in Christ's resurrection immortality is no longer a hope. He looks in through the open door and sees the world of light beyond. "For now is Christ risen . . . and become the first fruits of them that slept."—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*

We judge of His perfect day
By our poor life's glimmering spark,
And measure eternity's circle
By the segment of an arc.

We say, they have taken our Lord,
And we know not where He lies,
When the light of His resurrection morn
Is breaking out of the skies.

And we stumble at last when we come
On the brink of the grave to stand,
As if the souls that are born of His love
Could slip their Father's hand!

—*Phœbe Cary.*

August 28.

Even though we are subject to disease and to sudden death, even though we may at any moment die in the very midst of our work and be compelled

to leave it unfinished, yet this by no means necessarily affects the quality of the work. The painter may sit down at his easel, and after making one stroke with the brush may drop dead, and yet that single stroke may be just what it should be. The composer may be stricken down in the very midst of the music he is writing, and still every note as far as he has written may be the one best calculated to express his thought and to produce the most perfect harmony. The Christian worker may never perform but one single act, but that does not determine that the act shall not be performed with whole-heartedness and in the spirit of Christ.

—Rev. James A. Duncan.

HOLD a group of meadow grasses
  Up against the clear blue sky;
You may search the wide world over,
But you never will discover
  A more perfect harmony
Than a group of meadow grasses,
Brown and perfect meadow grasses,
Touched by every wind that passes,
  Held against a soft blue sky.

—Dora Read Goodale.

August 29.

To young people the idea of death is repulsive. It is natural that it should be so. They are strong, vigorous, and hopeful. The most of life lies before them. They have studies to pursue and work to accomplish. They expect to grow and know and achieve. Why, then, should they take kindly to the idea of death,

or be looking around to find a pleasant spot to be buried in? Now there are morbid young people who sing sentimental hymns about the grave, and who sometimes in uncomfortable moods wish that they could leave this world. But these are very foolish and not really pious young people. Life is better than death. And they are best prepared to live who are best prepared to die. . . . Dear young reader, live on, live long, live well, but live all the while so that at death you will look backward with pleasure and look forward with joyful triumph. Let your present work—in school, at home, in the shop—and let all the recreations of your young life be conducted in the interest of personal strength and purity, and with your deathbed, your funeral, and your everlasting destiny in view.

—Bishop Vincent.

August 30.

MAN'S forgiveness may be true and sweet,
But yet he stoops to give it. More complete
Is love that lays forgiveness at thy feet,
And pleads with thee to raise it.

—Adelaide A. Proctor.

THE angel of requests—so the legend runs—goes back from earth heavily laden every time he comes to gather up the prayers of men. But the angel of thanksgiving, of gratitude, has almost empty hands as he returns from his errands to this world. Yet ought we not to give thanks for all that we receive and for every answered request? If we were to do this, our hearts would always be lifted up toward

God in praise. There is a story of some great conductor of a musical festival suddenly throwing up his baton, and stopping the performance, crying, "Flageolet!" The flageolet was not doing its part, and the conductor's trained ear missed its one note in the large orchestra. Does not God miss any voice that is silent in the music of earth that rises up to Him? And are there not many voices silent, taking no part in the song, giving forth no praise? Shall we not quickly start our heart-song of gratitude, calling upon every power of our being to praise God?—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

August 31.

NOT wrath, dear Lord, Thy mercy seals,
Our own unrighteous hands
Hold back Thy shining chariot wheels,
And rob the wistful lands.

For none shall walk in perfect white
Till every soul be clean;
So close for sorrow and delight
These human spirits lean.

But thou go forth and do thy deed,
In forest and in town,
Nor sigh for ease, while pain and need
Are plucking at thy gown.

And thus, when bitter turneth sweet,
And every heart is blest,
Perchance to thee God's hand shall mete
His unimagined rest.

—*Katharine Lee Bates.*

IT is a great thing to love Christ so dearly as to be "ready to be bound and to die" for Him, but

it is often a thing not less great to be ready to take up our daily cross and to live for Him.—*John Caird.*

ARE there times when the world threatens to become too much to us, the near hillocks of time to hide from us the more distant mountains of eternity, earth's tinsel to outshine earth's gold? It is in God, in the light of His presence, as we press into that presence, that all things assume their due proportions, are seen in their true significance—the tinsel for tinsel, the gold for gold; that the hillocks subside, and the mountain tops reappear; that the shadows flee away, and the eternal substances remain.

—*R. C. Trench.*

September.

✠

BEHOLD! congenial autumn comes,
The Sabbath of the year.

—*Logan.*

NATURE has ripened her fruit and grain;
But what, O soul! are the sheaves you bring?
While the rich earth offers her golden gifts,
What is the gain of your harvesting?

Have you garnered patience from day to day?
Have you gathered the precious fruit of love?
Has charity grown by the dew of tears
And the sunshine streaming from above?

In the sheathing husk of the outward life
Have you found the kernel God yearns to give?
Have you gained with the body's nourishment
The "word" by which a man doth "live?"

—*Mrs. M. F. Butts.*

NINTH MONTH.

"Autumn to winter, winter into spring,
Spring into summer, summer into fall—
So rolls the changing year, and so we change."

CAN anything sweeter and more satisfying be imagined than the glorious days of September? Summer's fierce heats have burned themselves out. Warm, sunny days, with clear, cool nights are here—starlighted nights, made musical by the cheerful chirping of the autumn crickets, the insistent notes of the katydids, the shrill monotone of innumerable insects, and the occasional hooting of an owl in the edge of the woods. The rains have revivified the sun-scorched grass, and no early frosts have yet touched the garden flowers which flaunt their brilliant beauty in gay disdain—loveliest of all just before death. The tranquil air is full of delicious scents—a mingling of the pungent odors of marigolds and nasturtiums, of ripening apples and plums and purpling grapes. Along the roadside late wild flowers bloom—asters, and lady's slippers, and great rosy thistles; the blackberry vines are tinged with dull crimson; the boughs of the mountain ash bend under the weight of the ruddy berry clusters; the sumac reddens here and there; the leaves of the silver birch gleam like gold in the sunlight; the barberry stalks are laden with red fruit; the maples are flecked with scarlet; and

"How deepening bright like mounting flame doth burn
The golden-rod upon a thousand hills."

It is autumn—"the little pause of waiting in the time that falls between Nature's waking and her sleeping"—the blessed, peaceful days, the days of harvest, of coronation.

September 1.

CONSIDER the birds that have no barns nor harvest weeks,
God gives them food;
Much more our Father seeks to do us good.
—*Rosetti.*

THE secret of being lovely is in being unselfish.
—*J. G. Holland.*

THERE'S no such thing as shutting people up. Everybody's little yard room opens into all outdoors.
—*Mrs. Whitney.*

LIVING to Christ in small things and living for Christ every day is the secret of large fruitfulness. A peach tree or an orange does not leap into a bounty of fruit by one spasmodic effort; an orchard does not ripen under a single day's sunshine. Every raindrop, every sunbeam, every inch of subsoil does its part. A fruitful Christian is a growth. To finish up a godly character by a mere religion of Sundays and sermons and sacraments and revivals and special seasons is impossible. A man may be converted in an instant, but he must grow by the year. The tough fiber of the slender branch that can hold up a half bushel of oranges is very different from a little willow switch; it is the steady, compacting process that makes that little limb like a steel wire. Such is a healthy and holy believer's life. Every honest prayer that is breathed, every cross that is carried, every trial that is well endured, every good work for our fellow-men lovingly done, every little act that is conscientiously performed for Christ's glory, helps to make the Christian character

beautiful, and to load its broad boughs with "apples of gold" for God's "baskets of silver."

—*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*

September 2.

THE Christian life is the Christly life. It is having the mind of Christ. It is having the spirit of Christ. The Christian life, the Christly life, is the life of God in the soul.—*J. F. W. Ware.*

IF I, in harvest fields
Where strong ones reap,
May bind one golden sheaf
For Love to keep;

May speak one quiet word
When all is still,
Helping some fainting heart
To bear Thy will;

Or sing one high, clear song,
On which may soar
Some glad soul heavenward,
I ask no more!

—*Julia C. R. Dorr.*

FAITH, Hope, Love—these are the graces which "abide," and which are the mainstay of character and Christian life; united, they produce all the fruits of the Spirit. Faith looks at the unseen and prevents undue heed to that which is visible. Love lays hold on the unselfish and prevents absorption in the idols of self-interest. Hope reaches toward the future, the eternal, and prevents us from being controlled by the temporal and the present. When these three are thus joined human character takes on the features of the divine.—*Dr. A. T. Pierson.*

September 3.

AND I will trust that He who heeds
The life that hides in mead and wold,
Who hangs yon alder's crimson beads,
And stains these mosses green and gold,
Will still, as He hath done, incline
His gracious ear to me and mine;
Grant what we ask aright, from wrong debar,
And, as the earth grows dark, make brighter every star.

—*Whittier.*

THE tree that bears the choicest fruit stands continually in the sunshine, without which the fruit can never evenly ripen and mature. So he who bears heavenly fruit must continually live in the light of the "Sun of righteousness," without which he can never accomplish anything, but is as the severed branch, withering away. "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." "Without Me, ye can do nothing." Let us, then, be careful to go in the "strength of the Lord God," or our efforts to honor Christ and win souls will end in failure.

—*Rev. C. W. Bibb.*

September 4.

"DOE the next thynge." What a grand motto that was! And that was a good motto, "*Répos ailleurs.*" Work here, rest is elsewhere; wipe thy tears; cease thy sighing; do thy work.

—*Frederic W. Farrar, D.D.*

LIFE'S autumn comes; the leaves begin to fall;
The moods of spring and summer pass away;
The glory and the rapture, day by day,
Depart, and soon the quiet grave folds all.

O thoughtful sky, how many eyes in vain
Are lifted to your beauty, full of tears!
How many hearts go back through all the years,
Heavy with loss, eager with questioning pain,—
To read the dim Hereafter, to obtain
One glimpse beyond the earthly curtain, where
Their dearest dwell, where they may be or e'er
September's slender crescent shines again.

—*Celia Thaxter.*

September 5.

EVER since the snowdrop came up through the snow, and blessed us in the wild spring weather, there has been a perpetual ingathering of ripe things. The spring blossoms ripened when our eyes had been gladdened and our hearts had fed on their beauty and sweetness, and when their time came they passed away; they are harvested in the granaries of life; the corruptible has put on incorruption, and the mortal, immortality; they are not in our memory merely, but in our being.

The first fruits of summer came; it was ordained of heaven that they should not wait for the later harvest; they must ripen in June or not at all; and so they ripened and were gathered, and reckoned in the harvest of the year. There were other fruits which came to their perfection in the strong sun of August. They must be gathered when they were ripe; they could not wait for the early frosts; and they had a part of the harvest too, just as truly as the grapes and corn. The completeness of the harvest, then, is in the great span of it; and we only

understand what is fruit unto God when we understand and feel how good it is for our life to take in this long ripening, together with the vastness and variety. No human eye may ever see myriads of blessings we must count in the harvest of God, and yet the bluebell, waving in the wilderness, shall be a sky of azure fretted with gold for a host of God's creatures living under its vast domain and rejoicing in the completeness of its blessing.

—Rev. Robert Collyer, D.D.

September 6.

HEART of mine, be glad and gay,
Wear thy festival array,
Sing thy song for gathered fruit;
Why shouldst thou alone be mute,
When the winds from sea to sea
Ring in chords of jubilee?
After waiting, after prayer,
After pain and toil and care,
After expectation long—
Lo! the bright fulfillments throng;
Gleam the apples through the leaves;
Thickly stand the golden sheaves;
Earth is all in splendor drest;
Queenly fair, she sits at rest,
While the lovely autumn day
Dreams its happy life away.

—Margaret E. Sangster.

OVER the beauty of the plum and the apricot there grows a bloom more exquisite than the fruit itself—a soft, delicate flush overspreads its blushing cheek. Now if you stroke your hand over that it is

gone, and no power on earth can ever restore it. The flower that hangs in the morning impearled with dew, arrayed as no queenly woman was ever arrayed—once shaken so that the beautiful beads roll off, no power on earth can restore them. You may sprinkle water over it as much as you please, and yet it can never be made again as it was when the soft dews of night decked it with glorious gems. So there is an innocency, a modesty peculiar to youth, which, once lost, is lost forever. Just what it is, is hard to tell, but it is something God gives, and, lost, man can never restore.—*Anon.*

September 7.

I FIND that the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

> TO-DAY looks back on yesterday,
> Life's yesterday, the waiting time, the dawn,
> And reads a meaning into it, unknown
> When it was with us.
>
> —*Jean Ingelow.*

I HAVE seen a branch tied to a bleeding tree for the purpose of being ingrafted into its wounded body, and that thus both might be one. Yet no incorporation had followed; there was no living union. Spring came singing, and with her fingers opened all the buds; and summer came with her dewy nights and sunny days, and brought out all the flowers; and brown autumn came to shake the trees and reap the fields, and with dances and mirth to

hold the "harvest-home;" but that unhappy branch bore no fruit, nor flower, nor even leaf. Just held on by dead clay and rotting cords, it stuck to the living tree, a withered and unsightly thing. So also is it with many who have a "name to live and are dead."—*Thomas Guthrie.*

September 8.

THE effective life and the receptive life are one. No sweep of arm that does some work for God, but harvests also some more of the truth of God, and sweeps it into the treasury of life.—*Phillips Brooks.*

PIPE, cricket minstrels of the waning year,
In gentle concert pipe!
Pipe the warm noons; the mellow harvest near;
The apples dropping ripe;
The tempered sunshine, and the softened shade;
The trill of lonely bird;
The sad, sweet hush on Nature's gladness laid;
The sounds through silence heard!
Pipe tenderly the passing of the year;
The summer's brief reprieve;
The dry husk rustling round the yellow ear;
The chill of dawn and eve!
Pipe the untroubled trouble of the year;
Pipe low the painless pain;
Pipe your unceasing melancholy cheer;
The year is in the wane.

—*Harriet McEwen Kimball.*

THE damps of autumn sink into the leaves and prepare them for the necessity of their fall; and thus insensibly are we, as years close round us, detached from our tenacity of life by the gentle pressure of recorded sorrows.—*Landor.*

September 9.

I SEE not but that my road to heaven lieth through this very valley.—*John Bunyan.*

DEATH! Have you ever wrestled with the death-sorrow till you know its inner sweetness? Sweetness greater than all, I would almost say. The loss *is* loss. We say, perhaps, "It is *their* gain," and wish to be willing, but we are not willing. Our hurt gets no relief. The days go by, and the emptiness is as empty, and the silence as silent, and the ache as relentless in its pain. What shall we do? Our friends look on, and wish that they could help us. And they know that help will come, because to their own wrestling it once came. They know that the heart of this pain is joy indeed. And if you ask how it came about in distress so very sore as yours, their differing words will probably amount to this: that such pain can be stilled in one way only, and that is by being *more actively unselfed*, by doing more for others right through one's sadness, by trying hard to do simply right. . . . It is only another instance of the correlation of Pain with Gain—through struggle; the correlation of difficulty with exultation—through wrestling; through the struggle, through the wrestle, through our will facing the hard thing, clinching it, never letting go, until we feel the gladness crowning us. We speak of the "ministry" of sin, of suffering, of disappointment, of sorrow, and speak truly; but none of these "minister," not one, until they have been mastered.

First our mastery, then their ministry. We say, "The Lord hath chastened us;" yes, but by summoning us to a wrestle in which it is our part never to let go!—*Rev. W. C. Gannett.*

September 10.

WHEN the wheat is carried home,
And the threshing time is come,
Close the door.
When the flail is lifted high,
Like the chaff I would not fly;
At His feet O let me lie
On the floor!

All the cares that o'er me steal,
All the sorrows that I feel
Like a dart,
When my enemies prevail,
When my strength begins to fail—
'Tis the beating of the flail
On my heart.

It becomes me to be still,
Though I cannot all His will
Understand.
I would be the purest wheat,
Lying humbly at His feet,
Kissing oft the rod that beat
In His hand.

By and by I shall be stored
In the garner of the Lord
Like a prize;
Thanking Him for every blow
That in sorrow laid me low,
But in beating made me grow
For the skies.

—*Anon*

September 11.

THERE is in man a higher than love of happiness; he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness.—*Carlyle.*

GOOD deeds are very fruitful; out of one good action of ours the Lord produces a thousand, the harvest of which is perpetual.—*Bishop Hall.*

FEW are needed to do the out-of-the-way tasks which startle the world, and one may be most useful just doing commonplace duties, and leaving the issue with God. And when it is all over, and our feet will run no more, and our hands are helpless, and we have scarcely strength to murmur a last prayer, then we shall see that, instead of needing a larger field, we have left untilled many corners of our single acre, and that none of it is fit for our Master's eye were it not for the softening shadow of the Cross.—*George Macdonald.*

September 12.

WHAT is the range that Nature gives her own?
With frost or fire she stays their flying feet,
And holdeth each within its native zone;
The pine its love, the palm, shall never meet;
Nowhere do roses bloom from field of ice,
Nowhere in valleys blooms the edelweiss.

—*Edith M. Thomas.*

THE most striking feature of the olive tree is its fixed and permanent habit of yielding fruit. Season after season—on the low alluvials or up on the rocky cliffs—the same bountiful crop comes in.

prompt as a sunrise, and always "on time." A follower of Jesus Christ who is habitually laborious in every good enterprise, who is always abounding in love deeds and sweet, gentle words of sympathy, and in ministrations of mercy at sick beds and in poverty's cellars or attics, who distills true piety like holy oil into every day of his life, who drops his benign influence on the driest and bleakest spots that misery ever cursed, who loves to do good and cannot help it, and would chafe himself to death if he were not allowed to do good—such a man answers to the Bible description that "his beauty is as the olive tree." He has a habit of loving Christ and loving his fellow-men; not on special occasions, but all the while. It is his way. We can count on him; and we go to him for a contribution of money, or of a timely prayer or speech in a prayer meeting, or a good service of any kind, just as confidently as we go to a Bartlett pear tree in its September abundance of golden fruit. This blessed fruitfulness is the gift of the Holy Spirit who dwelleth in him; he is always alive, because Jesus Christ liveth in his innermost soul, and supplies the vital sap.

—Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.

September 13.

LOOK starward; stand far and unearthly,
Free-souled as a banner unfurled.
Be worthy, O brother, be worthy!
For a God was the price of the world.

—Joaquin Miller.

THE sorrowing son said to the dying Scotch woman, "Is it dark, mother?" "Nay, nay, laddie, it is light on the other side."

WE tell Thee of our care,
Of the sore burden, pressing day by day,
And in the light and pity of Thy face
The burden melts away.

We breathe our secret wish,
The importunate longing which no man may see;
We ask it humbly, or, more restful still,
We leave it all to Thee.

—*Susan Coolidge.*

GOD has need of sufferers as well as of laborers in His kingdom. The service of a sufferer is a more difficult, and therefore a higher, service than that of the laborer. Not everyone is qualified for the higher service. God, therefore, takes those, sometimes, who promised to be the most effective laborers, and transforms them into sufferers.

—*Hopeful Words.*

September 14.

O, WHAT a glory doth this world put on
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky, and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent!
For him the wind, aye, and the yellow leaves,
Shall have a voice, and give him eloquent teachings.
He shall so hear the solemn hymn that Death
Has lifted up for all, that he shall go
To his long resting place without a tear.

—*Longfellow.*

THERE is a machine in the Bank of England which receives sovereigns, as a mill receives grain, for the purpose of determining wholesale whether they are of full weight. As they pass through, the machinery, by unerring laws, throws all that are light to one side, and all that are of full weight to another. That process is a silent but solemn parable for me. Founded as it is upon the laws of nature, it affords the most vivid similitude of the certainty which characterizes the judgment of the great day. There are no mistakes or partialities to which the light may trust; the only hope lies in being of standard weight before they go in.

—William Arnot.

September 15.

IN His wide fields walks the Master,
In His fair fields, ripe for harvest,
Where the evening sun shines slantwise
On the rich ears heavy bending.
Saith the Master, "It is time."
Though no leaf shows brown decadence,
And September's nightly frostbite
Only reddens the horizon,
"It is full time," saith the Master,
The wise Master, "It is time."

Lo! He looks. That look compelling
Brings His laborers to the harvest;
Quick they gather, as in autumn
Passage birds, in cloudy eddies,
Drop upon the seaside fields;
White wings have they, and white raiment,
White feet shod with swift obedience,
Each lays down his golden palm branch,
And uprears his sickle shining,
"Speak, O Master—is it time?"

—Dinah Mulock Craik.

CULTIVATE a loving manner. How much harm is done by a *disagreeable* Christian! O, it is a sad thing to fold up in a napkin the talent of manner, to lose the key of the casket, to forget the *sesame* to the hearts of men!—*Anon.*

September 16.

A SOLDIER can never fight successfully in another man's armor.—*A. W. Tourgée.*

MINE is a daily cross of petty cares,
Of little duties pressing on my heart,
Of little troubles hard to reconcile,
Of inward troubles overcome in part.

I dare not lay it down; I only ask
That, taking up my daily cross, I may
Follow my Master, humbly, step by step,
Through clouds and darkness, unto perfect day.

—*Anon.*

TAKING up one's cross means simply that you are to go to the road which you see to be the straight one; carrying whatever you find is given you to carry, as well and stoutly as you can; without making faces, or calling people to come and look at you. Above all, you are neither to load or unload yourself, nor cut your cross to your own liking. Some people think it would be better for them to have it large; and many, that they could carry it much faster if it were small; and even those who like it largest are usually very particular about its being ornamental, and made of the best ebony. But all that you have really to do is to keep your

back as straight as you can, and not think about what is upon it—above all, not to boast of what is upon it.—*John Ruskin.*

September 17.

SAVE us from the evil tongue,
From the heart that thinketh wrong,
From the sins, whate'er they be,
That divide the soul from Thee!

—*Anon.*

I SAW a beautiful vase, and asked its story. Once it was a lump of common clay lying in the darkness. Then it was rudely dug cut and crushed and ground in the mill, and then put upon the wheel and shaped, then polished and tinted and put into the furnace and burned. At last, after many processes, it stood upon the table, a gem of graceful beauty. In some way analogous to this every noble character is formed. Common clay at first, it passes through a thousand processes and experiences, many of them hard and painful, until at length it is presented before God faultless in its beauty, bearing the features of Christ Himself. Spiritual beauty never can be reached without cost. The blessing is always hidden away in the burden, and can be gotten only by lifting the burden. Self must die if the good in us is to live and shine out in radiance. Michael Angelo used to say, as the chippings flew thick from the marble on the floor of his studio, "While the marble wastes, the image grows." There must be a wasting of self, a chipping away contin-

ually of things that are dear to nature, if the things that are true and just and honorable and pure and lovely are to come out in the life. The marble must waste while the image grows.—*J. R. Miller, D.D.*

September 18.

WE are never shut out from service and testimony; the most ordinary events of life are sufficient to display the love and power of God. No matter if inclosed by uncongenial surroundings, no matter if the door is shut. We are ever gathering or scattering—God's service is not all in the sight of man.

—*Anna Shipton.*

"REAPER," I asked, among the golden sheaves,
Toiling at noon amid the falling leaves,
"What recompense hast thou for all thy toil,
What tithe of all thy Master's wine and oil?
Or dost thou coin thy brow's hot drops to gold,
Or add to house and land, or flock and fold?"

The reaper paused from binding close the grain,
And said, while shone his smile through labor's stain,
"I do my Master's work, as He has taught;
And work of love with gold was never bought.
He knoweth all of which my life hath need;
His servants reap as they have sown the seed.
With all my heart I bind my Master's grain,
And love makes sweet my labor and my pain."

—*Anon.*

September 19.

HALF the misery in the world comes of want of courage to speak and to hear the truth plainly and in a spirit of love.—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

HOLY Spirit, Peace divine!
Still this restless heart of mine;
Speak to calm this tossing sea,
Stayed in Thy tranquillity..

—*Rev. S. Longfellow.*

"FRUIT—an' *fruit in his season*—that's what is wanted. A crop o' blankets an' soup-kitchens for winter. A crop o' Patience for March winds; a bit o' Pity for them that need it; an' Help an' Brotherliness an' Love all the year round. That's the sort o' man we do want. An' you'll find that sort o' man in one place an' no other. 'Tis no good tryin', you can't get him any other way. He do grow right up out *o' meditation 'pon the word o' the Lord.* Stick to the word, you young folks—everything else a'most will grow out o' that."—*Daniel Quorm.*

September 20.

"IN the midst of much failure, have the heart to begin again."

LEAD, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

—*Cardinal Newman.*

MAN, having one kind of an eye given him by his Maker, proceeds to construct two other kinds. He makes one that magnifies invisible objects thousands of times, so that a dull razor edge appears as thick as three fingers, until the amazing beauty of color

and form in infinitesimal objects is entrancingly apparent, and he knows that God's care of least things is infinite. Then he makes the other kind four or six feet in diameter, and penetrates the immensities of space thousands of times beyond where his natural eye can pierce, until he sees that God's immensities of worlds are infinite also.—*Bishop Foster.*

September 21.

"THERE's generally more comfort than ache, if we didn't live right in the middle of the ache. But, you see, that's the great secret to find out. If we ever *do* get it—complete."

NOT the sweet, shy charm of April, not the roseate grace of June,
Not the lilied later summer sleeping in the August noon,
Have such power to stir our longings, have such memories dear and deep,
As this time when earth is hushing, like a child before its sleep.

Voices once that made our music, fill no more the lonely days;
Faces once that made our sunshine, beam no longer on our ways;
Hands which clasped our own so warmly, folded lie beneath the sod,
And above their strange quiescence blooms and fades the golden-rod.

Still our souls go forth undaunted, victors amid loss and strife,
And we gather consolation, in whatever stress of life,
From the thought that over yonder, where the immortal anthems swell,
There is utmost peace and safety, and with Christ the ransomed dwell. —*Margaret E. Sangster.*

September 22.

THE dark brown mold's upturned
By the sharp pointed plow,
And I've a lesson learned.

My life is but a field
Stretched out beneath God's sky,
Some harvest rich to yield.

Where grows the golden grain?
Where faith? where sympathy?
In a furrow cut by pain.

—*Rev. Maltbie D. Babcock.*

GOD washes the eyes by tears until they can behold the invisible land where tears shall come no more. O Love! O Affliction! ye are the guides that show us the way through the great airy space where our loved ones walked. God teaches us, while yet our sorrow is wet, to follow on and find our dear ones in heaven.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

September 23.

LET our prayers ascend morning and evening. Let our days begin and end with God.

—*William E. Channing.*

HUMAN nature is sordid and mean and base, and human nature is grand and heroic and sublime. And the history of the mean men of the world shows how bad you and I can be, without trying very hard either. And the history of the great and the heroic and the divine men shows what you and I might become if we would let God have His way with us. Put a violin in the hands of a poor player,

and you will put your fingers in your ears to keep out the dissonance. Put the same instrument in the hands of a skillful player, and you will feel the soul breathing through the instrument. It is the player that makes the difference. Look all along the line of human history, and you may see what kind of figures God can make out of clay like yours; you may hear what kind of music He can play on instruments such as you are.—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*

September 24.

WAIT till the clouds are past, then raise thine eyes
To bluer skies.

—*Adelaide A. Proctor.*

"THE love of Christ constraineth me." It is in the light of these words that we come to understand the meaning of the cross of Christ. If love is to be the king of your life and mine, if with us here, amid all the strife and rivalry that make up our "workaday world," the voice that bids us love is to be regnant over all other voices, somewhere or other there must be the spell that compels us to do so. An apostle has found the spell when he wrote, "The love of Christ constraineth me;" and other men than he, aye, a multitude whom no man can number, have looked also into the Face crowned with thorns, and have learned there how to love.

—*Bishop Henry C. Potter.*

O LOVE that passeth knowledge, Thee I need;
Pour in the heavenly sunshine; fill my heart;
Scatter the cloud, the doubting, and the dread—
The joy unspeakable to me impart! —*H. Bonar.*

September 25.

THE little bird sat on a slender limb,
Upward swinging,
And though wind and rain were rough with him,
Still kept singing.
"O little bird, quick, seek out your nest!"
I could not keep from calling;
"The bleak winds tear your tender breast,
Your tiny feet are falling."
"More need for song
When things go wrong,
I was not meant for crying;
No fear for me,"
He piped with glee,
"My wings were made for flying."

My heart had been dark as the stormy sky
In my sorrow,
With the weight of troubles long passed by,
And the morrow.
"O little bird, sing!" I cried once more,
"The sun will soon be shining.
See, there's a rainbow arching o'er
The storm cloud's silver lining.
I, too, will sing
Through everything;
It will each blessing double,
Nor yet forget,
When rude winds fret,
To fly above my trouble."

—*Myra Goodwin Plants.*

September 26.

PATIENCE, humility, and utter forgetfulness of self are the true royal qualities.—*Thomas Hughes.*

WE are mirrors. We cannot help being reflectors. We reflect in our characters every influence that touches our lives. We become like those with

whom we associate. Two boys in a university in England roomed together for eight years. Toward the end of that time these two boys were so much alike that it became remarkable. They had reflected and reflected until one was almost the image of the other. If you called on one, and found the other one instead, you might talk to him on the same subjects and expect to receive the same answers that you would from the other. I once knew a girl who was growing so saintly that everyone wondered. No one guessed her secret. She became very ill, and a dear friend of hers obtained permission to open a locket which she wore constantly about her neck. There she saw engraved on the inside of the locket the clew to the secret: "Whom having not seen we love." If we reflect the glory of the character of Christ, we shall be changed from glory to glory—that is, from character to character. . . . Do you not see the infinite possibilities of this? We are to go on and on. We are to be God's reflectors in this world.—*Professor Henry Drummond.*

September 27.

"My life is not my own, but Christ's, who gave it,
And He bestows it upon all the race;
I lose it for His sake, and thus I save it;
I hold it close, but only to expend it;
Accept it, Lord, for others, through Thy grace!"

ANSKAR, the faithful and fearless monk who introduced Christianity into Sweden, was in many respects one of the most lovely and noble charac-

ters in the whole mediæval period. In his rapturous aspiration after personal holiness, according to the Christ pattern, he once said: "One miracle I would, if worthy, ask the Lord to grant me, and that is, that by His grace He would make me a good man." Indeed, that is the greatest miracle—to be a "good man." The most divine quality in Christ was His purity; not purity as an abstract something fit only for cloister or closet, but a purity which found active exercise in unselfishness and in beneficent ministry for others. The great supreme mission to which God has summoned most of His children is the attainment of simple goodness in the home, in the social life about them, in business, anywhere, everywhere.—*Charles Parkhurst, D.D.*

September 28.

If spring doth wake the song of mirth,
If summer warms the fruitful earth,
If winter sweeps the naked plain,
Or autumn yields its ripened grain,
Still do we sing
To Thee, our King;
Through all their changes Thou dost reign.

Lord of the harvest, all is Thine!
The rains that fall, the suns that shine,
The seeds once hidden in the ground,
The skill that makes our fruits abound!
New, every year,
Thy gifts appear;
New praises from our lips shall sound!

—*John Hampden Gurney.*

To be spiritually minded is life and peace; and they who are eminently so are eminently happy. Nor is any labor to be accounted painful in comparison to the sweetness of so resting upon God. The way to such blessedness may be trying, the steps to be taken may cost much self-denial, but the results are unspeakably glorious and delightful. Nor is there any happiness to be compared with that which is enjoyed by a growing Christian, a saint, whose life is truly hid with Christ in God. The happiness of walking with God daily is very great. It is blessed to breathe after God, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and to long for the communication of His Spirit. It is blessed to feel with the psalmist that the soul thirsteth for God, thrice blessed to cry out, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God!"—*Rev. George B. Cheever.*

September 29.

AND daily, hourly, loving and giving
In the poorest life make heavenly living.
—*Rose Terry Cooke.*

LAST September, in an afternoon walk on the shore of Loch Awe, I saw an aspen tree that reminded me of the burning bush of the desert. Its foliage was one blaze of the most vivid scarlet. I never saw such a wonderful display of color. The leaves were not dead like the usual sere leaves of autumn; they were, on the contrary, quite fresh and

full of life. I drew nearer to see the cause of this strange transformation, why the bush burned and was not consumed, and I found that the tree grew on a little mound, from which the waters of a rill that existed only in rainy weather had washed away the soil, leaving the roots to a large extent exposed. The conditions of life were thus unfavorable; but instead of being made less beautiful, it became more beautiful in consequence. The poverty of its soil had changed the ordinary dull green of its leaves into the most brilliant red, as if each separate leaf were a flame in the heart of a furnace. A soft breeze of evening whispered through the trembling, fiery tongues of the transfigured aspen, and in my awe-stricken soul I heard the still small voice as of old from the burning bush, telling me that thus it is with the human life, from which the stream of circumstances washes away all its worldly good things in which it trusted, leaving its roots bare and exposed. God's breath kindles in it a beauty unknown before, which no mere prosperous worldly condition could have developed; and the poverty and sorrowfulness of its state, which worldly men pity, only make it glow with the light of heaven, and its cross becomes its crown.

—*Rev. Hugh Macmillan, D.D.*

September 30.

THE summer is ended!—what have I done
To make it rich with fruits of love?
What wandering feet have I turned or won
From paths of sin to the courts above?

What have I done for the kingdom of God?
What for the kingdom of God within?
Larger of soul for the way I have trod,
Better for all I have heard and seen?

Amid the fashion and whirl of the world
Have I walked untouched by its flame?
When evil passions their flag unfurled,
Did I blush or delight in the shame?

The summer is ended; what have I gained
That will weigh in the balance, one day?
For the scales are just and the hand is trained,
Deciding all in the judgment day!

The summer is ended; autumn has come!
Bring in your sheaves—the winter is nigh;
Welcome it loud with your harvest-home!
Fruitage of faith laid up in the sky.

—*Rev. F. Bottome.*

October.

✣

THERE, enchanting, fair, serene,
Dwells October, like a queen.
. . . . . .
Hers, the elm with spreading glory,
Hers, the ripe year's finished story,—
All the wealth of freighted sheaves,
All the songs of harvest eves.

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

THE month of carnival of all the year,
When Nature lets the wild earth go its way,
And spends whole seasons in a single day.
The springtime holds her white and purple dear;
October, lavish, flaunts them far and near;
The summer charily her reds doth lay
Like jewels on her costliest array;
October, scornful, burns them on a bier.

—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

TENTH MONTH.

"On the maple trees
The scarlet leaves hang shining in the breeze;
And the brown stubble fields are crisp and sere,
Touched by the hoarfrost of the waning year."

THE frost's frigid breath has swept across the more delicate garden blossoms, leaving blackness and blight; but the chilling nights only bring into brighter bloom many hardier flowers, and set the forest trees burning with transient gold-and-scarlet loveliness. "A melancholy month," urges a plaintive voice. Yes; perhaps so—to some. But the blessed harvest season, the fruition period, can never be wholly sad, wholly desolate. Pain, gloom, and sorrow should not be permitted to cloud these rarely beautiful, twilight-clipped autumn days.

"Rather let our spirits borrow
Gladness from the rich libation,
Nectar-brimmed at coronation
Of this loveliest month of all,
Diamond-threaded, of the fall."

And remember, "when the leaves are gone, we see more of the blue." Ah, yes! There are always compensations. So be thou hopeful, O tried and despondent soul, even though the branches of thy life are swept bare by the bitter wind of sorrow or adversity! Look always up into the unfathomable depths of the Father's love. He "knoweth;" He "remembereth." This somber period in your experience, when everything desirable seems taken from you, is necessary for your future growth in spiritual life. Can you not already see "more of the blue?"

October 1.

Lo, the last clusters! pluck them every one,
And let us sup with summer, ere the gleam
Of autumn sets the year's pent sorrow free,
And the woods wail like echoes from the sea.—*Rosetti.*

THAT marsh in August was only one wide stretch of uninteresting green, through which sluggishly flowed the creeks. But in the latter part of autumn what a brightening of the tints, as if a hidden and smoldering fire had broken through to the surface! There are patches of scarlet, clumps of crimson, varied by vivid wood-shades just ready to burn, all this brightness dying down at the right to an ashy gray. You can now track those blackish creeks by their banks of yellow sedge, and through such borders of gold they bend in and out till they reach the blue sea. "It takes a hard frost to do this," says a spectator. Whatever may be the relation of the frost to the autumnal foliage, a point so much discussed, there is yet the fact that they usually come together. In the spiritual life is there not a similar fact? We are disappointed in temporal plans, we are chilled by some sorrow, only the dying vines of hope lie heaped on the ground. But toward God is there not a kindling of affection? The glories of another world brighten before our eyes, and is not character beautified? Is not interest in God's work more ready to flame out? Autumn-time down among our hopes and plans, but glory-time on the summits of Christian character.

—*Sunday School Journal.*

October 2.

THE day is long, and the day is hard,
We are tired of the march and keeping guard;
Tired of the sense of a fight to be won,
Of days to live through, and of work to be done;
Tired of ourselves and of being alone.

And all the while, did we only see,
We walk in the Lord's own company;
We fight, but 'tis He who nerves our arm,
He turns the arrows which else might harm,
And out of the storm He brings a calm.

The work which we count so hard to do,
He makes it easy, for He works too;
The days that are long to live are His,
A bit of His bright eternities,
And close to our need His helping is.

—*Susan Coolidge.*

A GOOD deacon, whom I know, derives great happiness from the thorough tillage of a small farm. Each year he puts away in his cellar a large store of fine apples. On the table in his cozy sitting room there always stands a basket of fruit to which the family, as well as visitors, always feel at liberty to help themselves. His habitual thrift, however, impairs somewhat the beauty of this beneficence. It is his custom always to bring up from the cellar the apples which show slight traces of decay, that they may be eaten up first, the deacon hoping that by and by he will arrive at the unimpaired fruit. But decay keeps constantly in advance of him, so that his amiable wife was once heard plaintively to remonstrate that they lived on "specked apples" all

the winter through. How many people there are who defeat themselves by overlooking their present blessings in their eager anxiety to secure some future good, and thus violate our Lord's precept, "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow : for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."—*Edward Judson.*

October 3.

AUTUMN once more begins to teach ;
Sere leaves their annual sermon preach ;
And with the southward-slipping sun
Another stage of life is done.
The day is of a paler hue,
The night is of a darker blue,
Just as it was a year ago ;
For time runs fast, but grace is slow !

Life glides away in many a bend,
In chapters which begin and end ;
Each has its trial, each its grace,
Each in life's whole its proper place.
Life has its joinings and its breaks,
But each transition swiftly takes
Us nearer to or further from
The threshold of our heavenly home.

. . . . . .

Have I laid by from summer hours
Ripe fruits as well as leaves and flowers ?
Hath my past year a growth to harden,
As well as fewer sins to pardon ?
Is God in all things more and more
A king within me than before ?
I know not, yet one change hath come,
The world feels less and less a home.

—*F. W. Faber.*

October 4.

WE show plainly enough what we should do were the whole volume of life in our hands at once. The dull places and the long places, the places where things won't happen—ah ! these are the very ones God means us most to read.

—Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.

O THOU, who all my life hast crowned
With better things than I could ask,
Be it to-day my humble task
To own from depths of grief profound
The many sins, which darken through
What little good I do !

—Alice Cary.

IT is the duty and privilege of all to work away from sorrow and gloom and dullness toward joy. I know what griefs come to us—Rachel weeping for her children because they are not, fathers broken-hearted over dead Absaloms. I know how shut in and pressed down many of you are, how vast your desires and how small your portion ; what dead weights of shame and tender sorrow hang on you ; what physical ailments, what lack of training, what force of evil habit, what clamor of appetite, what memory of evil, what earthiness of spirit, what infirmities of temper, shut you off from this world of joy. Still, you are to work toward it. Tears must flow and the head must bow in shame for a while, but when nature and conscience have had their due, turn once more to life, knowing it to be good.

—Theodore T. Munger, D.D.

October 5.

WHY are any Christian faces clouded and thick? Why are there any Christian hearts that are sullen and tired? Call upon your spirits to give thanks unto the Lord God. That door of escape is ever open, that gateway into gladness can never be shut; and, day after day, you can "magnify the Lord, and worship His name, ever world without end." "Lift up your hearts unto the Lord," for indeed "it is meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks" to God for His great glory.—*Canon H. S. Holland.*

COME walk with me along the forest ways
This autumn day. What peace is in the air!
The world we look upon is wondrous fair.

The far-off hills are dim in purple haze,
And in the woods near by the maples' blaze
Is like a ruddy bonfire. Here and there
The golden-rod lifts up its torch in air,
And scarlet woodbine lights the woodland ways.

The birds sit silent by their empty nest;
The air is drowsy with a spell of dreams,
And as the leaves fall slowly, one by one,
We look away into a golden west,
And while the year's pale twilight round her gleams,
Earth sits with folded hands, her work all done.

—*Eben E. Rexford.*

October 6.

LET us hold our faith, not as a lantern to hunt heresy with, but as the light of God to live and to work by. That is what the faith is for. That is the

practical test to which it must be brought, to which I believe God in His providence, by the very dissensions of Christendom, is bringing it to-day. Too much we have regarded it simply as a matter of speculative opinion; too much we have been satisfied with a mere theoretical assurance.

—*Rev. David H. Greer, D.D.*

WHEN you have been at the coast you may sometimes have seen a boat high and dry on the sands, and as those who were pushing labored to get her afloat, every minute she lurched over, now to this side, now to that, her keel sinking deeper than ever into the sand. But look! what is that stealing up the firth slowly and silently? It is the tide; and when it surrounds the boat what a difference between the convulsive efforts of man and the ease with which it takes and dandles the boat like a child upon its mother's breast! Such is the contrast between the efforts of man and the ways and the work of God.—*Rev. James Stalker, D.D.*

October 7.

WHO soweth good seed shall surely reap;
The year grows rich as it groweth old,
And life's latest sands are its sands of gold!

—*Julia C. R. Dorr.*

AUTUMN time again. The falling leaves remind me to-day of the joyous remark of a happy child, who, looking up into the face of one who was lamenting the ravages of autumn among the trees, said: "Just think how much more room it gives

you to see the beautiful blue sky beyond!" The year has brought its desolation. The hot tears filled and fell from our eyes, and when clear sight came again, a loved form had vanished; comforts that we had thought we could not live without were suddenly snatched away from us; sickness came at a time when it seemed we could least afford to bear its enforced burden; the hope upon which we had laid our plans was shattered, and the shadow of a great disappointment fell upon our lives. It was God's method of clearing the way that we might look up into the face of the Eternal and Unchangeable, and gather supplies for the needs of the soul. O, the comfort of the upward look at such a time! We miss the blessing of heavenly consolation and the vigor of spiritual growth if we keep our eyes upon the dead leaves at our feet, or fail to look beyond the stripped branches of the trees just overhead.—*W. N. Burr.*

October 8.

O THOU, to whose all-searching sight
The darkness shineth as the light,
Search, prove my heart, it pants for Thee;
O burst these bonds, and set it free!

Wash out its stains, refine its dross,
Nail my affections to the cross;
Hallow each thought; let all within
Be clean, as Thou, my Lord, art clean!

—*John Wesley.*

THE atmosphere of a house is what makes it homelike. Every living creature has an atmosphere of his own. He can be as chilly and damp and dis-

agreeable as a March wind; he can be as bright, cheerful, and charming as a June morning; he can be as dark and impenetrable as a November fog, or as crisp and electric as a day in December. It depends entirely on ourselves whether we are ugly, cross, tyrannical, fretful, nagging, sulky, and unbearable, or kind, considerate, tender, thoughtful, cheery, sweet, and wholesome.—*Anon.*

THE might of eloquence is spiritual; the problem of it as insoluble as that of music. Ideas do not furnish it; mere words cannot convey it. The boy Heinrich Heine said of the old French drummer in his father's household: "When he talked about liberty I did not understand, but when he played the Marseillaise on his drum, then I understood." Sentences and talk are one thing; the roll of drums and bleat of bugles, like the throb and thrill of vivid and electric eloquence charged with occult spiritual and elemental power, are another thing. The difference is a matter of experience, though not of definition, to Heine and to us.

—*W. V. Kelley, D.D.*

October 9.

WHEN leaves are lying low
Beneath October's tread,
Across the empty fields I go
Where hopes are harvested—
Along a narrow, grass-grown way
Within a mossy gate
Where dead leaves love so well to stay,
Their falling I await.
"O dear, decaying leaves," I cry—
"What heavenly hopes beneath you lie!"

When leaves are lying low,
And, crushed beneath my feet,
They turn to earth, I ought to know
The lesson once so sweet,
That autumn surely leads to spring,
And leaflets rise from dust—
I see the vanished blossoming,
And weep because I must.
"These leaves are dead," I sadly say,
"And will be dead for aye, for aye."
"New leaves shall spring. New leaves shall spring,"
I hear it overhead—
It whispers in the boughs that fling
Their dust above the dead;
"New leaves shall spring," the winds repeat—
The brooklet sings it o'er.
"From Death to Life"—O hope so sweet,
Stay with me evermore,
Till doubt beneath the leaves shall lie
And newborn faith shall touch the sky!

—*Julia H. May.*

"STRANDED Christians" is the thought suggested. Not a wrecked boat—only a stranded one. Not wrecked lives, wrecked characters, wrecked faith and hope—simply stranded. They have got out of their proper element; they are not in the current; they are high and dry on the rocks, or the sands; they are not doing anything; their religion is of the least possible use to themselves or to the world. They are just stranded; you have told their whole story in that single word. . . . There was no intention in it at the first, but one thing led to another until the present result was reached. They

were neglectful in little things; careless about little duties; they got out of the habit of secret devotion, and allowed the closet of prayer to become the place where the books and accounts of the business were stored. Perhaps they were detained at home by providential circumstances for a long time, and then when they went back to the Lord's house they did not receive as hearty a welcome as they had expected. Perhaps they had some plan which they could not carry out, some "ax to grind," and nobody was willing to turn the grindstone; and so they came to the conclusion that they were "not appreciated." Perhaps they didn't like the preaching, or the minister didn't call often enough, or he didn't buy his dry goods and groceries at their store, or his wife was proud and "stuck up." O, it is easy enough to get your boat out of the water! It is not hard to strand a Christian who is willing to be stranded.

—*Rev. J. K. Wilson.*

October 10.

BOUGHS are daily rifled
By the gusty thieves,
And the book of Nature
Getteth short of leaves.

—*Thomas Hood.*

THERE is no beautifier of complexion, or form, or behavior, like the wish to scatter joy and not pain around us.—*R. W. Emerson.*

HE makes the very things that seem to work against Him work for Him; He summons the very foes of God and brings them, as it were, to the

wheels of His chariot to swell His triumphal and redemptive procession. He calls on Sorrow and on Tears, and says to them, "Come, you, and teach mankind what pity and patience are." He teaches the American people what liberty is out of the clanking chains of slavery and the swish of the whip of the slave driver. He makes the very auction block reveal to us the value of home. He summons Sin, and the Devil, prince of sinners, and says to him and all his brood, "You shall teach men what is the depth of the love of a God that forgives and redeems and reclaims humanity; you shall whether you will or no; you shall despite themselves."

—Lyman Abbott, D.D.

October 11.

I CANNOT say, and I will not say
That he is dead—he is just away!
With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land,
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since he lingers there.
And you—O you, who the wildest yearn
For the old-time step and the glad return—
Think of him faring on, as dear
In the love of There as the love of Here.
. . . . .
Think of him as the same, I say;
He is not dead—he is just away!

—James Whitcomb Riley.

MEN talk about dying as though it were going toward a desolate place. All the past in a man's

life is down hill, and toward gloom; and all the future in a man's life is up hill, and toward glorious sunrising. There is but one luminous point, and that is the home toward which we are tending, above all storms, above all sin and peril. Dying is glorious crowning; living is yet toiling. If God be yours, all things are yours. If Christ be yours, all heaven is yours. Live while you must, but yearn for the day of consummation, when the door shall be thrown open, and the bird may fly out of his netted cage, and be heard singing in higher spheres and diviner realms.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

October 12.

DUTIES are ours, events are God's.—*Blunt.*

HARD may be Duty's hand; but lo! it leads
Out into perfect joy, where pain shall cease;
God sees thy striving, and thy patience heeds,
And thou shalt find His peace.

—*Celia Thaxter.*

BECAUSE Duty often wears an unlovely face, and speaks with a harsh voice, we dare not therefore argue that we are not permitted to shut our eyes to its signs and our ears to its appeals. Duty is inexorable; it is not to be escaped; we can never, strive as we may, be free from obligation; the field must be tilled whether we will or no. Our actions have irrevocable consequences; but so, though we are apt to overlook this, have our inactions. To repel one's task will only make it more difficult; to accept it is the sole way to make it tolerable. And,

rightly accepted, peace, if not happiness, will follow its fulfillment, "as waves flow in on the furrow of the ship's strong keel."—*Sunday at Home.*

October 13.

BE not simply good—be good for something.

—*Thoreau.*

"HER face was pinched and pale and thin,
But splendor struck it from within."

Splendor from within! It is the only thing which makes the real and lasting splendor *without*. Trust that inevitable law of self-expression. *Be*, not seem! Be *to* seem! Be beautiful, and you will by and by seem so. Carve the face from within, not dress it from without. Within lies the robing room, the sculptor's workshop. For whoever would be fairer, illumination must begin in the soul—the face catches the glow only from that side. It is the spirit's beauty that makes the best face, even for the evening's company; and spirit's beauty is the only beauty that outlasts the work and wear and pain of life. The single prayer worth praying in this connection is that of Socrates, the ugly man: "Ye gods, grant me to become beautiful in the inner man; and that whatever outward things I have may be in harmony with those within!"

—*Rev. W. C. Gannett.*

October 14.

THE honest service of Jesus Christ pays the soul a rich dividend of solid satisfaction. There is no wretchedness in a true Christian's trials; his bruised

flowers emit sweet fragrance. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace; the promise of the Lord Jesus is that His joy shall be full. The sweetest honey is gathered out of the hive of a busy, unselfish, useful and holy life.

—*Theodore Cuyler, D.D.*

THE beautiful summer is cold and dead,
She has passed away like the rest—
The other fair summers, long since fled
From the woods and the meadow crest.
The blossoms of spring were white and sweet,
But they paled and shrank from the touch of the heat.
The fields are shining yellow and dun,
Where the autumn gathered its tale of grain.
We thank Thee, Lord, for the blessed sun,
We thank Thee for the rain!

Our beautiful summer is gone and fled,
We are older grown and gray;
The spring is gone from the youthful tread,
The laugh from the lips once gay;
The childish hope in the childish eyes
Is darkened by many a sad surprise.
But the promise stands sure, as then it stood;
We can smile in loss, as we smiled in gain;
And we thank Thee, Lord of the year, for the good,
And we bless Thee for the pain!

—*Anon.*

October 15.

ENDEAVOR to be patient in bearing with the defects and infirmities of others, of what sort soever they be; for that thyself also hast many failings which must be borne with by others.

—*Thomas à Kempis.*

DOES the road wind up hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the journey take the whole long day?
From noon to night, my friend.
—*Christina G. Rossetti.*

I WAS walking along one winter's night, hurrying toward home, with my little maiden at my side. Said she: "Father, I am going to count the stars." "Very well," I said, "go on." By and by I heard her counting—"Two hundred and twenty-three, two hundred and twenty-five. O dear," she said, "I had no idea there were so many."

Ah, dear friend, I sometimes say in my soul, "Now, Master, I am going to count the benefits." Soon my heart sighs, not with sorrow, but burdened with such goodness, and I say to myself: "I had no idea that there were so many."—*Mark Guy Pearse.*

October 16.

"LEAVES have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath;
The stars to set—but all—
Thou hast *all* seasons for thine own, O Death!"

THE sight of falling leaves is saddening. Yet if we really fade as they, there is cause for grateful rejoicing. The leaf fades when its work is done. It has an important function as the lungs of the tree. The sap circulating through its surface receives the oxygen breathed in from the atmosphere. This combines with the carbon, and by the influence of light is so changed as to be capable of depositing new material as the vitalizing current descends behind the bark, forming each year an additional

ring round the stem. Thus every leaf, however weak and small, helps to build up the solid tree. The strongest portion of the oak is formed by the weakest. So the soul of man, breathing the air of heaven, and basking in the Sun of righteousness, by a divine chemistry transforms the natural into the spiritual, and not only becomes strong but insensibly builds up the great tree of humanity, the nation, and the church. Each single leaf, the young, the small, the obscure, renders help, and adds to the beauty of the forest though it is itself unobserved. And each one of us by righteousness and love may help to beautify the moral world, and make the wilderness rejoice. . . . We do not live in vain if we have helped to make life less burdensome and have comforted any of God's children, the least of Christ's brethren, in the dusty highway. We need not regret if we do fade as a leaf, fulfilling its purpose ere it falls.—*Rev. Newman Hall.*

October 17.

THE law of our nature is ascendant. We do violence to it, to ourselves, when we fail to advance, to move upward. "He who aims at the sun flies higher than he who aims at a tree," says an old proverb. In the education of our mental, as in that of our spiritual, capacities, we are in duty bound to press toward the mark of the prize of our high calling, as beings endowed with powers that are eternally to endure and to expand.—*Abel Stevens, D.D.*

SOMETIMES we sow in soil of sin;
Sometimes where choking thorns abound;
And sometimes cast our good seed in
Dry, stony ground.

Our stalks spring up and fade and die
Under the burning noontide heat,
And hopes and plans about us lie
All incomplete;

And as the toilsome days go by
Unrespited with flowery ease,
Angels may cry out, "Vanity
Of vanities!"

O, when, fruitionless, the night
Descends upon our day of ills,
God grant we find our harvests white
On heavenly hills!

—*Alice Cary.*

October 18.

THE sad, discouraged Christian, who feels his shortcomings and the degeneracy of the times in which he lives so overwhelmingly as to take away his peace and joy, needs to get out into God's pure air upon some errand of mercy.

—*Francis E. Clark, D.D.*

WHEN cares around us thicken
Every day
On our way,
And our lagging steps we quicken
To meet them as we may,
'Mid the hurry
And the scurry
Which we meet,
It is sweet
To cast off every worry,
And leave it at His feet.

—*Anon.*

OFTTIMES, methinks, the shaded eye
Most fathoms Thine infinity.

—*Paul Pastnor.*

THE Cologne Cathedral is an embodiment in stone of the idea of "united prayer." It is a series of points and pinnacles from the ground to the top of the great spire. Every window is a pointed arch; every buttress goes up to a point; every roof ridge is guided off into little uplifting spires; the great roof points up; and the whole building unites in the great spire, which pierces away into the sky and seems to carry the united cry of the whole building to God.—*J. L. Hurlbut, D.D.*

October 19.

THE right and pure use of every good gift of God, and the real self-denial involved in unselfishness, nobility of character, and bravest, truest thought—these should take the place so long usurped by the artificial self-denial and discipline of asceticism.

—*Rev. David Nelson Beach.*

WHEN the maple turns to crimson,
And the sassafras to gold;
When the gentian's in the meadow,
And the aster's on the wold;
When the moon is lapped in vapor,
And the night is frosty cold;
When the chestnut burs are opened,
And the acorns drop like hail,
And the drowsy air is startled
With the thumping of the flail—
With the drumming of the partridge,
And the whistle of the quail;

Through the rustling woods I wander,
Through the jewels of the year,
From the yellow uplands calling,
Seeking her who still is dear;
She is near me in the autumn,
She, the beautiful, is near.

. . . . . .

So I think, when days are sweetest,
And the world is wholly fair,
She may sometimes steal upon me
Through the dimness of the air,
With the cross upon her bosom,
And the amaranth in hair.

Once to meet her, ah! to meet her,
And to hold her gently fast
Till I blessed her, till she blessed me—
That were happiness at last.
That were bliss beyond our meetings
In the autumns of the past.

—*Bayard Taylor.*

October 20.

THEY only the victory win
Who have fought the good fight and have vanquished the demon that tempts us within:
Who have held to their faith, unseduced by the prize that the world holds on high;
Who have dared for a high cause to suffer, resist, fight—if need be, to die.

—*Anon.*

IT is a very curious and interesting fact that the word "character," which comes over into our English speech directly and without change of sound from the Greek, signifies first the sharp tool with which a seal or a die is engraved, and then the inscription or the object which is cut in the seal or in

the die. Our character, then, is the image and the superscription which we cut upon our life; I say which *we* cut, for, however much happens to us and bears upon us from outside causes beyond our control, it is true, in the last analysis, that we determine our own character. We hold the tools which cut the legends on our life, we grave the die, we incise the seal. What are the tools with which we cut character upon ourselves? The tools are thoughts. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. The style and the subject of the engraved character depend on the choice of tools and on the manner of their use. The legend on the seal shows what was in the mind of the engraver as he cut with his tools. Here is a seal with a cross cut in it. That cross was the leading idea in the engraver's mind for that seal; and his busy tool translated that invisible thought of his mind into this fixed and visible sign. Character is invisible thought translated into visibility, and, fixed before the eye, cut on the life.

—*Charles Cuthbert Hall, D.D.*

October 21.

THE tree-top high above the barren field,
Rising beyond the night's gray folds of mist,
Rests stirless where the upper air is sealed
To perfect silence, by the faint moon kiss'd.
But the low branches, drooping to the ground,
Sway to and fro, as sways funereal plume,
While from their restless depths low whispers sound:
"We fear, we fear, the darkness and the gloom;
Dim forms beneath us pass and reappear,
And mournful tongues are menacing us here."

Then from the topmost bough falls calm reply:
"Hush! hush! I see the coming of the morn;
Swiftly the silent Night is passing by,
And in her bosom rosy Dawn is borne.
'Tis but your own dim shadows that ye see,
'Tis but your own low moans that trouble ye."

So Life stands, with a twilight world around;
Faith turned serenely to the steadfast sky,
Still answering the heart that sweeps the ground,
Sobbing in fear and tossing restlessly:
"Hush! hush! the Dawn breaks o'er the eastern sea;
'Tis but thine own dim shadows troubling thee."

—*Edward Rowland Sill.*

SOME people seem to rake up all the sorrows of the past; to them they add the burdens of the present; then they look ahead, and anticipate a great many more trials than they will ever experience in the future; they tie them all together, swing them across their shoulder, and go reeling and staggering through the world with the accumulated load. If they should come to a warm religious meeting, they lay their burdens down for the moment, and say to themselves, "What a refreshing time we have had!" But no sooner do they leave the pew than the old load of trouble is shouldered, and they are as downcast as before.—*D. L. Moody.*

October 22.

THE end of life is not to do good, although many of us think so. It is not to win souls, although I once thought so. The end of life is to do the will of God. That may be in the line of doing good, or

winning souls, or it may not. For the individual, the answer to the question, "What is the end of my life?" is, "To do the will of God, whatever that may be." Spurgeon replied to an invitation to preach to an exceptionally large audience, "I have no ambition to preach to ten thousand people, but to do the will of God," and he declined. If we could have no ambition past the will of God, our lives would be successful. The maximum achievement of any man's life, after it is all over, is to have done the will of God. No man or woman can have done any more with a life; no Luther, no Spurgeon, no Wesley, no Melanchthon can have done any more with their lives; and a dairy maid or a scavenger can do as much. There is no happiness or success in any life until that principle is taken possession of.—*Professor Henry Drummond.*

THE tide ran low, ran very low, ran out;
Autumn had settled down upon the land,
And winter's face, the face of death, was sweet—
For there was calm, an end of strife and doubt.
Strange grew the common sky, the wonted strand,
Since here no more our loving eyes could meet,
No more the aching heart and wearied feet
Rest by Love's side and hold his tireless hand.
But one day, walking by the morning sea,
There rose a wave of summer and of youth
That broke resistless through grief's narrow bound
And wrought life's past and present and to be
Into one marvelous vision of the truth;
The imperishable joy swept in without one sound.

—*Mrs. Annie T. Fields.*

October 23.

THY sinless mind in me reveal,
Thy Spirit's plenitude impart!
Till all my spotless life shall tell
The abundance of a loving heart.

—*Charles Wesley.*

GIVE me your family Bible and I will tell you your history. The Bible of the strong, prosperous, rich man—'tis like himself; well kept—too well. Hand me yours, man of the broken heart and the tear-stained cheeks and the reddened eye and the furrowed brow. Ah! all marks and thumbings and turnings down and marginal notes and pencil indications—thirty-third Psalm, fourth of Isaiah, a hundred places in Jeremiah, including the Lamentations—why, I need no concordance to this Bible if I want to seek out the promises. I see your guest has been sorrow and the hospitality you have offered him has been patience. If you would know the value of the Bible in the house, consult those who have needed it most, and abide by their sweet reply.

—*Joseph Parker, D.D.*

October 24.

LIKE the cloud that bodes disaster
Is the sad-faced purple aster;
"Winter comes," she cries, "be ready,
Meet the tempest, calm and steady;
He is coming, fast and faster,"
Says the lovely, sad-faced aster.

SOME day the headlong current of your life was stopped, the river ceased to flow, the waves stood still, and then the ocean, which the flowing of the

river had kept out, poured up in, and there were sacreder emotions in the old channels, and deeper hopes and fears beating upon the well-worn banks. The day when your great bereavement came; the day when the neighbors knew that death was in your house; the day when joy, with that subtle look of the possibility of deep pain, which is always in her eyes, came to your door and knocked in the first splendor of the rising sun; the day when, being weak and ill, you did not go to your business, and the streets you knew so well seemed strange to you as you looked out of the window—those were the days when God was feeding you. You lost the sense of being one who was to act, and you were one to whom God was to do something.

—*Phillips Brooks.*

October 25.

PATHFINDING in this mazy world is indeed a serious matter to him who looks at paths alone. But high above all paths is He who makes them all. And any soul that has the one Pathmaker as his ever-present leader, leaves the pathfinding to the blind and lost. . . . Receive, I pray you, the truth. Test it for yourselves. It is simple. It is old. True to-day, it was equally true in those ancient ages when faith first sang, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Seek not so much the path as the Pathmaker. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." "Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely, and thy foot shall not stumble."—*William F. Warren, LL.D.*

You thought, by efforts of your own,
To take at least each jarring tone
Out of your life, till all should meet
In one majestic music sweet;
And deemed that in your own heart's ground
The root of good was to be found;
And that by careful watering,
And earnest tendance, you might bring
The bud to blossom, and the fruit
To grow and flourish from that root;
You deemed you needed nothing more
Than skill and courage to explore
Deep down enough in your own heart
To where the well-head lay apart,
Which must the springs of being feed,
And that these fountains did not need
The soil that choked them moved away,
To bubble in the open day.
But, thanks to heaven, it is not so;
That root a richer soil doth know
Than our poor hearts could e'er supply;
That stream is from a source more high;
From God it came, to God returns,
Not nourished from our scanty urns,
But fed from His unfailing river,
Which runs, and will run on forever.

—*Archbishop Trench.*

October 26.

A MAN in prison, with a signed and sealed permission to leave it and walk at liberty lying on the table beside him, untouched, unopened, yet bemoaning himself and unhappy in his cell, is just the image of us unbelievers who have even a fragment of unhappiness about us. I think I can trace every scrap of sorrow

in my own life to this simple unbelief. How could I be anything but quite happy if I believed always that all the past is forgiven, and all the present furnished with power, and all the future bright with hope, because of the same abiding facts, which don't change with my mood, do not crumble because I totter and stagger at the promise through unbelief, but stand firm and clear with their peaks of pearl cleaving the air of eternity, and the bases of their hills rooted unfathomably in the Rock of God?

—James Smetham.

THOU layest Thy hand on the fluttering heart,
And sayest, "Be still!"
The silence and shadow are only a part
Of Thy sweet will;
Thy presence is with me, and where Thou art
I fear no ill.

—Frances R. Havergal.

IT is astonishing how soon the whole conscience begins to unravel if a single stitch drops; one little sin indulged makes a hole you could put your head through.—*Charles Buxton.*

October 27.

WE are here for so short a time, it is such a tiny portion of the road we travel, one stage alone in the vast years that belong to us, that we must not ask too much, but be content and bless the Lord. If, when we come to die, we have wrought out of our nature, hand in hand with Him, one evil twist, one false form of passion, redeemed a few failures, made one crooked place straight for ourselves or straight

for others—a much more important matter, and more important in the end for ourselves also—we may think ourselves fortunate. Indeed, this last is the great need for our nearness to God. It is in making one rough place smooth for our fellow-men, because we love them; in saving them from sin, false passion, or false aims; in healing their diseases; in redeeming their life from destruction, that we most certainly attain these blessings for ourselves.—*Rev. Stopford A. Brooke.*

If anything unkind you hear
About some one you know, my dear,
Do not, I pray you, it repeat
When you that some one chance to meet;
For such news has a leaden way
Of clouding o'er a sunny day.

But if you something pleasant hear
About some one you know, my dear,
Make haste—to make *great* haste 'twere well—
To her or him the same to tell;
For such news has a golden way
Of lighting up a cloudy day. —*Selected.*

October 28.

There is a picture called "The Angel of Consolation." A woman sits on the low rocks, looking out upon the sea. Desolation is all about her—not a flower, not a tree on the shore; only sand, rocks, and breaking waves. Down into the waters her heart's treasures have gone. Her face is stony in its despairing grief. Almost touching her shoulder,

hovering over her bowed form, is an angel, white-robed, softly striking the strings of a harp. Does the mourner know how near to her the angel is? Does she hear the celestial music? No; she sits in dumb unconsciousness, sad and lonely, while God's minister of comfort waits so close, and while the notes of sweet music fall unheeded on her ear.

Is not the picture true of many sorrowing ones? Is it not true, too, of many hungry lives, starving for other blessings? They do not take the gifts that the common days bring. Angels come to them unaware, in homely or unattractive disguise, walk with them, talk with them, and then only become known to them when their places are empty. We do not begin to recognize the worth of even our nearest human friends. With a wealth of precious love, and almost infinite helpfulness, they move beside us along the years; but their garb is plain, and we do not see the splendor that is in them. It would be well were we to pray to have our eyes opened that we might see the common angels God sends to bless our lives.—*Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.*

October 29.

"WHAT pity they are scentless,
These gorgeous blossoms red!"
"We'll take them as God gives them,"
A child most sweetly said.

Thus let us ever answer,
Whatever may befall;
We'll take it as God gives it,
And thank Him for it all.

The lives of some are brilliant
With rhododendron flowers;
Perchance they miss the sweetness
Of honeysuckle bowers.

But David had his mission
As shepherd and as king;
In high estate and lowly
We all may praises sing.

Contented with the blessings
Which God vouchsafes to give;
In every station seeking
To Christ our Lord to live.

—*The Christian.*

I START for Boston; the train winds and turns; at some particular moment I may not seem to be going in the right direction. But I know that this is the Boston train, and I am sure that it will reach that city. So let a man know, in the bottom of his soul, that the dominant purpose, the controlling motive, of his life is to glorify God, then let him throw himself with the utmost enthusiasm into his work, and he will not fail of securing the end which thus he seeks. We have lost much in our daily duties because we have not carried into them this religious spirit. Every obligation which rests upon a minister to glorify God in his work, rests upon all the members of the church to glorify Him in their spheres of activity.—*Robert S. MacArthur, D.D.*

October 30.

"THE air is full of hints of grief,
Strange voices touched with pain,
The pathos of the falling leaf,
The rustling of the rain."

THE burden of every sound we hear, the moral of every sight we see, is the old, old truth, which finds a ready response in every human bosom, "We all do fade as a leaf." That is the great *commonplace* of the world. It is so trite and true that it has lost in a great measure the power of truth; and therefore God is annually illuminating it to us by the many colored lights of autumn, and investing it, by the aid of Nature's touching pictures, with new power and impressiveness. Every year, at the fall of the leaf, He is spreading before us a great parable, in which our own decay and death are represented. And Nature, like a loving mother going before her timid and reluctant child in some difficult task, to show it the way and inspire it with confidence, is graciously ordained to go before us in her decay every autumn, to show us that we, too, must fade as a leaf, and to cheer and encourage us amid the despondency of such a fate by the assurance that, as with her by a physical law, so with us by a law of grace, life comes by death, and decay inevitably precedes a new and better growth.

—Hugh Macmillan, D.D.

October 31.

THE Lord is Wheelwright, and Builder. You *are* a wheel, and He has made you; He'll find an axle for you and put you on; and you shall go about His business, so that you shall wonder to remember that you were ever leaning up against a wall.

—Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.

NOT by appointment do we meet delight
And joy; they heed not our expectancy;
But round some corner in the streets of life
They on a sudden clasp us with a smile.

—*Gerald Massey.*

I REMEMBER my first copy book when a child. I got through the first line fairly, having the master's copy well under my eye. The second line, however, was a copy of my first, and the third a copy of my second. And so on. When, therefore, I got to the bottom of the page, there was very little likeness between my writing and that of the accomplished penman who wrote the line at the top of the page. In Christian work we have been doing something very similar to this. The first disciples copied the Master, the succeeding age copied the disciples, the third age copied the second, and so on. Accordingly, in some parts of the world there is very little similarity between the work last done and that which was first done. The Christian needs, therefore, to be constantly reminded that he must copy the first line. He must not copy his neighbor, nor his own earlier efforts, but look straight away to the Great Model.—*Dr. Pentecost.*

November.

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SHORTER and shorter now the twilight clips
The days, as through the sunset gates they crowd.

—*Alice Cary.*

NOVEMBER chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter day is near a close.

—*Robert Burns.*

AYE, goodman, close the great barn door;
The mellow harvest time is o'er,
The earth has given her treasure meet
Of golden corn and bearded wheat.
Ring out the words, "Who of his hoard
Doth help God's poor, doth lend the Lord!"
Go, get your cargoes under way—
The bells ring out Thanksgiving Day!

—*Harper's Weekly.*

ELEVENTH MONTH.

LIKE a rare jewel in a tarnished setting, Thanksgiving Day gleams out brightly from its dull environment of somber skies and frost-swept earth—the gladdest and the saddest day of the entire twelve months. Another year, with its blessings and its burdens, has slipped backward from our grasp, and, with hands and hearts full of varied experiences, we gather once more for the annual festival. In some faces only peace and content and quiet joy are visible. God has been good to you, and your happy hearts overflow with gratitude as you grasp the cup which is pressed down and running over. Across other faces is thrown the shadow of a great grief, and you murmur rebelliously through blinding tears, "How can *I* be thankful? The day is a mockery!" Dear one, in the midst of your bitter sorrow, do not forget that it is those whom He *loves* that the Lord chastens.

To many this holiday is one of the sacred "anniversaries of the heart," of which no word can be spoken except to the One to whom all secrets are open. There are others whose *living* trouble is well-nigh greater than they can bear—to whom the sweep of the death angel's wings would be rapture. And for those on beds of weariness and pain; those widowed and fatherless, keeping poverty at bay; those fiercely assailed by temptation; those whose lives are hard and bare and unlovely—what can this day of praise bring? Shall not we whom goodness and mercy have followed, we who have *much*, share generously with the less fortunate, the less blessed, and make our lives one long Thanks-giving, Thanks-doing, and Thanks-living Day?

November 1.

NOVEMBER is Thanksgiving month. The homely Puritan anniversary blends itself with the ancient festival of All Saints and All Souls.

"Homeward we haste to Heaven's Thanksgiving,
The harvest gathering of the heart."—*Lucy Larcom.*

"LET the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee! O let the nations be glad and sing for joy! . . . Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our God, shall bless us."

"Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. . . . The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

"I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. . . . What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? . . . I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people."

WE bless our God for wondrous wealth
Through all the bright, benignant year;
For shower and rain, for ripened grain,
For gift and guerdon, far and near.
We bless the ceaseless providence
That watched us through the peaceful days,
That led us home, or brought us thence,
And kept us in our various ways.
—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

November 2.

EVERYONE is peculiarly blessed. It would be a difficult matter for anyone to look around him and not see others in more trying circumstances than he.

If he has had losses, he can find those who have suffered greater losses; if he has had bodily afflictions, he can find those who have been more sorely afflicted. In one way or another he has escaped that to which his neighbor has fallen victim, the mere thought of which makes him shudder. There never is a time in any life when thanksgiving cannot appropriately be the chief portion of prayer.

—*Sunday School Times.*

Now wail low winds about the forest eaves,
  Now life grows cold 'neath cold and dreary skies,
And rustling ankle deep in fallen leaves,
  The lone, deserted wood path blanching lies;
Yet, pinched and wan, of youthful charm bereft,
The last forsaken gentian is left.

A wondrous fairness has the perfect flower,
  Serenely calm beneath a sapphire sky,
But holier far, in autumn's wildest hour,
  The constant love that cannot wholly die;
To me her radiant youth new faith did bring,
Yet now her pallor seems a higher thing.

—*Elaine Goodale.*

November 3.

If I cannot realize my Ideal, I can at least idealize my Real.—*W. C. Gannett.*

My strength is the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.

—*Tennyson.*

Instead of dwelling upon the nature of our angelic life, and wondering how we shall adjust ourselves to the extraordinary change from what we can but feel must be the difference between the temporal and the heavenly life; instead of occa-

sionally challenging ourselves as to our possible preparation for that supernal world, the one thing to be done is to see that we have now the eternal life—the life Godward—a life anyone can see, just as distinct and positive as the natural life or a worldly life; a life consecrated now to heavenly work and affections, bearing the manifest marks of an actual union with God, and filled with both the fruits and joys of the Spirit. There is no adequate preparation for heaven without this. There is no distant heaven without a present heaven. There can be no anxiety about the future life when the present is "hid with Christ in God." There is no other inspiration to holy living comparable to the presence of the life of heaven in the heart.

—Bradford K. Peirce, D.D.

November 4.

THOUGH the rain may fall and the wind be blowing,
And cold and chill is the wintry blast,
Though the cloudy sky is still cloudier growing,
And the dead leaves tell that summer has passed,
My face I hold to the stormy heaven,
My heart is as calm as the summer sea,
Glad to receive what my God has given,
Whate'er it be.

Small were my faith should it weakly falter,
Now that the roses have ceased to blow;
Frail were the trust that now should alter,
Doubting His love when storm-clouds grow.
If I trust Him once I must trust Him ever,
And His way is best though I stand or fall,
Through wind and storm He will leave me never,
He sends it all.

—E. N. Taylor.

IT is a "many-chambered" school, that in which God trains. None are excluded from it, all are welcome. It has room for all gifts, all circumstances, all conditions. It makes allowance for defects and shortcomings which are ruin in this world. Trained in this school many have reached a high place, who have had no "tincture of letters." Most of us have known some, especially in the humbler places in society, who had not any of this world's learning, had never heard even the names of the greatest poets and philosophers, yet who, without help from these, had been led by some secret way up to the serenest, most beautiful heights of character. It is indeed, a many-chambered school.—*J. C. Shairp.*

November 5.

LET every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life, and every setting sun be to you as its close; then let every one of these short lives leave its sure record of some kindly thing done for others—some goodly strength or knowledge gained for yourselves.—*Ruskin.*

THE little birds trust God, for they go singing
From Northern woods where autumn winds have blown,
With joyous faith their trackless pathway winging
To summer lands of song, afar, unknown.

And if He cares for them through wintry weather,
And will not disappoint one little bird,
Will He not be as true a heavenly Father
To every soul who trusts His holy word?

Let us go singing then, and not go sighing,
Since we are sure our times are in His hand.
Why should we weep, and fear, and call it dying?
'Tis only flitting to a summer land! —*Anon.*

SOMETIMES a hurry is the best thing. I am glad there are quiets *and* hurries. There always are two things. The world is all opposites; and one thing couldn't be without the other. You can't rest until you're tired; you can't be glad if you've never been sorry. We shall find it all out by and by; and how He sees everything is good.—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

November 6.

THERE'S not an hour but from some sparkling beach
Go joyful men, in fragile ships, to sail
By unknown seas to unknown lands. They hail
The freshening winds with eager hope and speech
Of wondrous countries which they soon will reach.
Left on the shore, we wave our hands, with pale,
Wet cheeks, but hearts that are ashamed to quail
Or own the grief which selfishness would teach.
O Death! the fairest lands beyond thy sea
Lie waiting, and thy barks are swift and stanch
And ready. Why do we reluctant launch?
And when our friends their heritage have claimed
Of thee, and entered on it, rich and free,
O! why of sorrow are we not ashamed?

—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

EVERY great sorrow is in a certain sense a lonely sorrow. It drives a man into the fastnesses of himself. . . . Christ is the one Guest who can enter the sacred chamber of a great sorrow. The soul's sense of loneliness yields to Him. The heart's sensitive reserve gives way. Christ enters, and thenceforth sorrow takes on a new meaning and aspect. The blinding bereavement, and crushing loss or disappointment, the trial that has wrenched the very

heart strings asunder, the awful temptation that has swept the soul at last from its moorings—all these crises of life fall into harmony with the divine love and the divine purpose when the Saviour enters the hidden chamber of our griefs. We never know what sorrow means, or what it can do for the soul till then. "Lo!" says Christ to the spirit brooding in lonely grief, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Blessed promise! Lord Jesus, come Thou into all our sorrow-burdened hearts; fill them with Thy divine sympathy, and help us to learn through Thy love the sacred meaning and uses of all life's dark and painful experiences!—*James Buckham, Ph.D.*

November 7.

I SOMETIMES feel the thread of life is slender
And soon with me the labor will be wrought;
Then grows my heart to other hearts more tender.
The time is short.

—Dinah Muloch Craik.

HERE are two men praying. One stands upon the corner of the street, correct, punctilious; at the appointed time he lifts his hands, he raises his voice that he may be heard of men. The other kneels in the dust, ignorant, stammering, feeble; he lifts his face to Christ and says, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief." And that broken, stammering cry of honest faith pleases God, and brings the blessing which would never come to the Pharisee though he stood on the street corner till the crack of doom.

Let us never be so foolish as to think that it makes no difference whether we believe or not. Faith is the soul of conduct; faith is the bloom, the breath, the vital power of religion; without it, virtue is the alabaster box, empty; faith is the precious ointment whose fragrance fills the house. Therefore, without faith it is impossible to please God.

—*Henry Van Dyke, D.D.*

November 8.

To give God thanks when brief, oblivious nights
The tranquil eve and blithesome morning part,
Easy as lark song that. But how when smites
The mace of sorrow, stings the malice dart?
Ah, unbelieving heart!

To give God thanks in words—this is not hard.
But incense of the spirit—to distill
From hour to hour the cassia and the nard
Of fragrant life, His praises to fulfill?
Alas, inconstant will!

—*Katharine Lee Bates.*

How watchful you are over your *words;* how closely you control your *looks;* how anxious you are that *action* shall stand before God and man clothed in the garb of propriety! But how is it with your *thoughts?* Ah! there is no check over them; they are permitted, nay, encouraged, to wander in and out of your heart, bringing in seeds of anger, pride, lust, and hatred, planting them there and bearing out the poisonous fruits—a harvest for eternity. "What you think, that you are." . . . Let me entreat you, therefore, to be more

watchful over your *inner life*. Remember you are the temple of the Holy Ghost. Realize this—the temple of the Holy Ghost! Nothing that defileth must be admitted there. Strive, watch, pray over your thoughts. Put away from you, sternly and resolutely, everything that would degrade them; and "whatsoever is pure, whatsoever is lovely, whatsoever is of good report, *think on these things*."

—"*Earnest Thoughts for Every Day.*"

November 9.

DULL duties a little way off may become God's rainbows to men.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

I WAIT

Till from my veiled brows shall fall
This being's thrall,
Which keeps me now from knowing all.
In stormless mornings yet to be
I'll pluck from Life's full-fruited tree
The joys to-day denied to me.

—*Mary Clemmer.*

"AN' do'e be *real;* don't be afraid for to call things by their right names. People do talk, an' do pray, like as if religion was something up in the sky, ever so far. No, if 'tisn't down here, close alongside o' us, an' if it don't go out with a man to his work—down the mine to the bottom level, or out to the fields, or into the workshop—'tis wisht poor trade, an' not worth the trouble o' keepin'. Religion have got to do with everything—with makin' butter an' mindin' the babies so much as it have with singin' hymns an' hearin' sermons. Do'e be *real* when you pray."—*Daniel Quorm.*

November 10.

THE year has lost its leaves again,
The world looks old and grim;
God folds His robe of glory thus,
That we may see but Him.

And all His stormy messengers
That come with whirlwind breath,
Beat out our chaff of vanity,
And leave the grains of faith.

. . . . . .

Then blow, O wild winds, as ye list,
And let the world look grim—
God folds His robe of glory thus,
That we may see but Him.

—*Alice Cary.*

THERE are men and women in whose lives the wind is whistling and shrieking, in whose hearts the waves of impatience, or envy, or dissatisfaction, or passion, foam and swirl and thunder against their barriers; and they are saying, "Why do you call out peace when there is no peace? We have troubles you know not of; we have lifelong repentances and sore disappointments and weaknesses that are as strong as tigers. How, pray, shall we be calm?" . . . I say only that once He is allowed to touch your troubled heart, once the Christ awakes in your life, there will be great calm. For peace is, after all, not the absence of the storm, but the presence of the Christ. Ask not, therefore, to be delivered from the storm, ask only to be possessed by the Christ. Pray not that you may have no battle to fight, no struggle to bear, no temptation, no pain, no respon-

sibility, but pray that the peaceful life of the Christ may calm you, and keep you calm "while these hot breezes blow." Pray that you may come to know that "far down beneath the wild commotion a peaceful stillness reigneth evermore."

—Rev. H. P. Collier.

November 11.

ALL day the stormy wind has blown
From off the dark and rainy sea;
No bird has past my window flown,
The only song has been the moan
The wind made in the willow tree.

This is the summer's burial time;
She died when dropped the earliest leaves,
And cold upon her rosy prime
Fell direful autumn's frosty rime—
Yet I am not as one that grieves;

For well I know o'er sunny seas
The bluebird waits for April skies;
And at the roots of forest trees
The Mayflowers sleep in fragrant ease,
And violets hide their azure eyes.

O thou, by winds of grief o'er blown
Beside some golden summer's bier—
Take heart! Thy birds are only flown,
Thy blossoms sleeping, tearful sown,
To greet thee in the immortal year.

—Edna Dean Proctor.

November 12.

WITHOUT self-sacrifice there can be no blessedness, neither on earth nor in heaven. He that loveeth his life will lose it. He that hateth his life in

this paltry, selfish, luxurious, hypocritical world shall keep it to life eternal.—*Charles Kingsley.*

LEANING on Him, make with reverent meekness
His own thy will,
And with strength from Him shall thy utter weakness
Life's task fulfill. —*J. G. Whittier.*

THE best thing we can do, infinitely the best—indeed the only thing, that men may receive the truth—is to be ourselves true. Beyond all doing of good is the *being* good; for he that is good not only does good things, but all that he does is good.
—*George Macdonald.*

November 13.

THE leaves are falling from flower and tree;
They are saying to you and saying to me,
"We have done our work on mount and lea;
Hast thou done thine?

"We have drained the nectar from sun and air;
We have given shade with these limbs now bare;
We have painted the hills with pigments rare,
From Hand divine."

And what hast thou done, O human soul,
To brighten the world, and reach the goal
Of heaven; to help, with thy gracious dole,
The heart that grieves?

And when thy years to a close are brought,
Thy Maker will ask if thou hast wrought
As much for the world, in hope and thought,
As the falling leaves.
—*Sarah K. Bolton.*

November 14.

A GENUINE depression of spirits, the result of religious doubts or real calamity, is worthy of our tenderest sympathy; but this never shows itself in

fidgety, querulous loquacity. Poor Cowper, "haunted all through the night season" by fears he wrestled against with strong prayers and tears; John Bunyan, in jail, feeling "as if the sun that shone in the heavens did grudge to give him light," were not worrying; they were drinking of that same cup that was drained to the dregs on Mount Calvary. Though God had slain these men, they would have trusted in Him. Worriers live under a far lower sky. They are such cowards that they will not even trust God unless upon "good security." Now faith casts a kind of honor upon God; it shows that we believe in His goodness and trust in His care; but worrying tells Him to His face that either His will to do us good, or His power, is wanting. . . . No one is justified in encouraging a fussy, tormenting anxiety about trifles. Egotism and selfishness are at the bottom of it. . . . Those who have known great calamities, real heart-breaking losses and griefs, are not worriers. The presence of a great sorrow hushes all fretful complaining. Little things "don't signify" when the home is breaking up, or the grave is open.—*Amelia E. Barr.*

November 15.

So, take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

—*Robert Browning.*

IF you have any trial which seems intolerable, pray—pray that it be relieved or changed. There is no harm in that. We may pray for anything, not wrong in itself, with perfect freedom if we do not pray selfishly. One disabled from duty by sickness may pray for health, that he may do his work; or one hemmed in by internal impediments may pray for utterance, that he may serve better the truth and the right. Or, if we have a besetting sin, we may pray to be delivered from it, in order to serve God and man, and not be ourselves Satans to mislead and destroy. But the answer to the prayer may be as it was to Paul, not the removal of the thorn, but instead, a growing insight into its meaning and value. The voice of God in our soul may show us, as we look up to Him, that His strength is enough to enable us to bear it.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE truer you are, the humbler, the nobler, the more you will feel Christ to be your King.

—*F. W. Robertson.*

November 16.

DE massa ob de sheepfol',
Dat guard de sheepfol' bin,
Look out in de gloomerin' meadows
Whar de long night rain begin—
So he call to de hirelin' shepa'd,
"Is my sheep, is dey all come in?"

O, den says the hirelin' shepa'd,
"Dey's some, dey's black and thin,
And some, dey's po' ol' wedda's,
But de res', dey's all brung in,
But de res', dey's all brung in."

Den de massa ob de sheepfol',
Dat guard de sheepfol' bin,
Goes down in de gloomerin' meadows
Whar de long night rain begin—
Den he le' down de ba's ob de sheepfol',
Callin' sof', "Come in, come in!"
Callin' sof', "Come in, come in!"

Den up tro' de gloomerin' meadows,
Tro' de col' night rain and win',
And up tro' the gloomerin' rain paf
Whar de sleet fa' piercin' thin,
De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol'
Dey all comes gadderin' in,
De po' los' sheep ob de sheepfol'
Dey all comes gadderin' in.

—*Sally Pratt McLean.*

November 17.

WHEN the hour of death comes—that comes to high and low alike—then it's na what we ha'e dune for ourselves, but what we ha'e dune for others that we think on maist pleasantly.—*Sir Walter Scott.*

A VISITOR going into the studio of a great painter found on his easel some very fine gems, brilliant and sparkling. Asking why he kept them there, the painter replied: "I keep them there to tone up my eyes. When I am working in pigments, insensibly the sense of color becomes weakened. By having these pure colors before me to refresh my eyes the sense of color is brought up again, just as the musician by his tuning fork brings his strings up to the concert pitch." For right living we need clear conceptions of the perfect One. Such con-

ceptions only produce high moral impressions. We need to be toned up. We need the high and holy life of the perfect Man, Christ Jesus.—*David Gregg, D.D.*

November 18.

VOICE of Jehovah! Thou art speaking still,
In tones of ancient majesty, to man!
In rushing blasts I hear Thee, and Thy voice
Sounds from the rolling wheels of cloud, in thunder!
I hear Thee in the scented sighs of summer,
And in these hoarsely wailing winds that come,
And grow tempestuous about our doors,
When starlessly the autumn night descends:
But still more clearly thou art heard within—
A thrilling Voice, and near akin to silence,
With sweet reproof, devotion's minister.
We hear, and bow before Thee, while the pines
Sway on the hills beyond, where Thou art treading:
We, in our cottage, by the evening fire,
With reverence name Thee; and our gray-hair'd sire—
The patriarch of our group—puts up a prayer;
With rising hymns we laud Thy holy name;
Blent with the descant of the stormy wind,
Perchance our evensong ascends to Thee,
Accepted in Thy high abode of praise.

—*Rev. A. Y. Lockhart.*

November 19.

WHEN generous acts bloom from unselfish thought,
The Lord is with us, though we know it not.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

To all of us, young and old, men and women, the scene in the house of Simon the leper comes across the feverish centuries with its quiet sermon, asking us if we are as faithful to the best impulses of our natures as the woman was to hers. . . . Are

we breaking a single flask of precious ointment in disinterested self-forgetfulness in behalf of any oppressed and injured child of the eternal Father? Are we simply striving the best we may to

> "Look up and not down,
> Look out and not in,
> Look forward and not back,
> And lend a hand?"

Now, as then, the real struggle of life is not for bread and clothing, but for ideals, for truth and purity; into this higher struggle this peasant woman of Bethany entered and did what she could. Are we doing as much?—*Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones.*

November 20.

> How sweet to know
> The trials that we cannot comprehend
> Have each their own divinely purposed end.
> —*Frances R. Havergal.*

TELL me what you feel in your solitary room when the full moon is shining in upon you and your lamp is dying out, and I will tell you how old you are, and I shall know if you are happy.

—*Henry Frederic Amiel.*

SORROW sometimes is so personal, so great, it is kept hid away beyond the reach of human sympathy, its story is never told. There are griefs the most real that "hang no crape on the door bell, that drop no tears that men can see, that get no sympathy, save that of the blessed Christ." The heaviest burdens of life are carried in secret cham-

bers, over the portals of which love itself is compelled to write, "No admittance," and, with aching hearts, we pass by, asking no questions.

—*Rev. S. K. Smith.*

November 21.

How sadly beats the heavy autumn rain;
How mournful drives the wind among the trees;
Along the shore the weary sailor sees
The waves roll in that send him out again;
The birds are restless in the scattered leaves,
The clouds move wildly on in massy fold,
And all the outer world, or earth, or air,
But yesterday, so warm, so fair,
Is changed, and in a night, to drear and cold.

Now goes the golden autumn far away;
Now nearer comes the winter to my door;
And thus doth Nature, working evermore,
Create new life from changes and decay.
O Christ! who in the hall of Pilate bore
For me the scourge and mocking, for Thy sake
Fill up the daily loss in life of mine
With Thy life! So shall love divine
Out of the changing the unchanging make.

—*Anon.*

Go to the man who is carving a stone for a building; ask him where is that stone going, to what part of the temple, and how is he going to get it into place, and what does he do? He points you to the builder's plans. This is only one stone of many. So, when men shall ask where and how is your little achievement going into God's plan, point them to your Master, who keeps the plans, and then go on doing your little service as faithfully as if the whole temple were yours to build.

—*Phillips Brooks.*

November 22.

A LOOK, a word, and a smile,
They help through many a mile
Of toil, trouble, and tears
When the heart is full of fears
And the way is gloomy.

Be ever soft in thy speech,
You know not how far words reach;
And thy glance be kind and glad,
To aid the tired and sad
When the load is heavy.

—*The Christian.*

IT is said that Oliver Cromwell, while visiting one of the great churches in England, discovered a number of silver statues in the niches of a side chapel and demanded sternly of the trembling dean, "What are these?" "Please, your highness," was the reply, "they are the twelve apostles." "The twelve apostles, are they? Well, take them down, and coin them into money, that, like their Master, they may go about doing good." I see many rich gifts and powers adorning your lives — gifts of speech, of song, of love, of influence, of capacity for work. They are very beautiful there, in your soul, but Christ wants them at work, doing good.

This is my first counsel to Christian young people: Bring every grace and gift of your life into Christ's service. Not only use well the gifts you have employed already, but develop what you have into greater skill and power. Strive to excel. Grow by working. An artist, when asked, "What is your

best picture?" answered, "My next." Never look back for your best work for Christ, but forward; make to-morrow your best day.

—*Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D.*

November 23.

THE frost is on the hills, and summer's work is done,
I fain would think that gentle Nature grieves
O'er all the lessening splendors of the setting sun,
The fragile glory of the dropping leaves.

—*Edward D. Rand.*

THE merchantman sees his ships departing upon their perilous quest with a feeling of painful solicitude. The ever-hungry sea, the baffling winds, the wild tempests which mock at precautions, the capriciousness of markets, all shake his heart with fear. But look now as she comes careering up the bay with every sail set and drawing! They may be worn and patched, and discolored by age and exposure; her cordage may be slack by excessive strain in a hundred storms, the paint worn from her sides by the dash of a thousand billows, seams open and leaking; but she's safe at last. . . . So with the aged—the voyage is about ended. Only a little dismantling and stowing away, and it is over. How many of our anxieties we are permitted to dismiss! This riddle is solved; the dreaded uncertainties of the sealed future of our career are recorded facts, the enigmas are resolved theorems.

—*Mark Trafton, D.D.*

GRACE is the breeze that fills the sails, my compass is faith, and my pilot Christ.—*Tholuck.*

November 24.

"AN arm of aid to the weak,
A friendly hand to the friendless,
Kind words so short to speak,
But whose echo is endless—
The world is wide, these things are small,
They may be nothing—but *they are all!*"

"LOOK Up and Lift Up" is a condensed Gospel, uniting the broad invitation, "Come!" with the great command, "Go!" *Come*, for healing, for help, for wisdom. *Go*, to carry to others what you have received. As you go, "look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith." "As you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." First "chosen out of the world," then "sent forth into the world," filled with the light "in which is no darkness at all." Then bidden to let that light so shine that men, seeing it, may glorify its divine source. Fed with the bread and refreshed with the water of life, and then sent to offer to the starving multitude, "without money and without price," that which alone can satisfy its hunger and quench its thirst. You cannot "lift up" until you first "look up;" you cannot "look up" without wishing to "lift up."—*Emily Huntington Miller.*

November 25.

BRIEF mortal life affords but few opportunities for actions supremely great, but numberless opportunities for little routine deeds of eternal import. Every living person ought to make sure that every

thought, word, and deed should glorify God and be an uplift to some struggling soul.—*Bishop Mallalieu.*

A GOLDEN bird sat in a tree,
And sang, "O people, list to me,
For I am Opportunity.

"You have me now—at least, you may,
This very hour, this very day;
But no one knows how long I stay.

"So catch me quick before I fly,
Or you in vain may strain your eye
And long for me with fruitless sigh.

"'Tis passing strange that you, who know
How swift the moments onward flow,
Should still delay, and let me go!

"Pale Hesitation oft, I ween,
Has brought about that sorrow keen—
A heart-break for the 'might have been.'

"Can naught stir up your sluggish will?
Your lives are grinding in Time's mill,
Which whirleth, and stands never still.

"Be firm and strong, the moments save,
And let not sad-eyed Failure wave
Her dreary arms above your grave."

—*Anon.*

November 26.

O GIVE thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever!—*Psalm cxxxvi*, 1.

OUR whole life should be one of thanksgiving. Thanks for all God's blessings is only just tribute. We may be sorrowful, but notwithstanding that fact

we ought to be thankful. There is no greater blessing than a thankful heart. We owe a debt of gratitude which we should always be paying—never ceasing to our latest breath.—*Anon.*

KEEP a Cheerful heart;
Keep a Humble heart;
Keep a Reverent heart;
Keep an Incorruptible heart;
Keep a Simple heart;
Keep a Trustful heart; and
You will have a CHRIST heart.

—*Earl Cranston, D.D.*

November 27.

OFFER unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High.—*Psalm l*, 14.

WE thank Thee, Lord!
Giving or taking, be Thy name adored:
Nay, ever giving, death alone fulfills
The hope with which each heart in gladness thrills.
Thought cannot fathom, nor can words express
The gift of the eternal blessedness.

—*Charlotte Elliot.*

ENTER into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.—*Psalm c*, 4.

HAPPINESS is a gift which is inexhaustible. You have seen a plant in the window, with all its leaves turned toward the light, drinking sunshine till it was full of the wine of life. And yet are the sunbeams that fall upon it absorbed? Do they lose anything of their life-giving power, no matter how deeply the plant drinks of them—no matter if a

thousand plants drank of them all day long? That is the quality of true happiness, the happiness which springs from the sympathy of soul with soul. It cannot be worn out or consumed. It spreads from life to life, warming, and renewing, and strengthening wheresoever it falls.—*Zion's Herald.*

November 28.

O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! . . . the earth is full of Thy riches.—*Psalm civ, 24.*

"AND I would make thanksgiving
For the sweet double living,
That gives the pleasures that have passed away
The sweetness and the sunshine of to-day."

WE are in this world like a child who plays upon the floor with a disintegrated map, which she does not know how to put together. Here is some father-love, and here some mother-love, and here some brother-love, and here some wife-love, here some love that is wrathful against wrong, and here some love that is beautiful with suffering, and here some love that is merciful and compassionate toward the sinful—love all broken up in fragments; put them together. Take your life for this task, and put them together; and when all the fragments of life are put together, you will find the map is love, for life is God and God is love.—*Lyman Abbott, D.D.*

November 29.

THE eyes of all wait upon Thee; and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.—*Psalm cxlv, 15, 16.*

THANKSGIVING DAY, and thou away?
I mind me how in years gone by
Across the wide, foam-crested sea
Some pressing duty called for thee,
And though we wept to say "Good-bye,"
And lonely were the hours, yet we
Looked to the future hopefully;
And even our Thanksgiving cheer
Thine absence did not wholly mar;
Our hearts' love sped to thee afar,
And soon we hoped to greet thee near.
. . . . . .
Ne'er to return, thou'rt now away,—
How *can* it be Thanksgiving Day?

Thanksgiving Day, and *thou* away?
Yet stay! Methinks, love, now I see.
When the Atlantic's heaving tide
Its billows tossed 'twixt thee and me,
What dangers might thy path betide
I knew not; yet faith gave me peace,
And all my anxious care surcease.
But now I *know* no grief can come,
Or danger, to that blissful home
Where thou at heaven's Thanksgiving feast
Dost find thyself a welcome guest.
Till I shall share that joy and rest
Where thou art blessèd, though away,
In *faith* I'll keep Thanksgiving Day.

—*Meta E. B. Thorne.*

THANKS-GIVING means thanks-living.

—*John Newton.*

November 30.

How much we have to praise Him for! The blessings of a kind Providence that have come every morning and have been renewed every evening—

home, friends, health, food, life with all its accompanying blessings, these have been ours in generous measure. The fever laid others upon a bed of pain to be raised up again to find hearing gone or eyesight impaired. The fire destroyed in a few moments of time the earnings of many years of honest toil. The storm swept like a besom of destruction, leaving ruin and desolation in its wake. The monster, Death, with icy hand and poisonous breath, entered unnumbered happy homes, and from thence have come sounds of weeping and groans of despair. While so many have been in darkness and sorrow, we have walked amid sunshine and gladness. Why has this been so? Surely not because we have merited anything. But God is good. His mercy is great. Let all join in an anthem of praise!

—Epworth Herald.

LET everything that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise ye the Lord!—*Psalm cl*, 6.

December.

✣

LAST of all the shrunk December
Cowled for age in ashen gray,
Fading like a fading ember,
Last of all the shrunk December.

—*Austin Dobson.*

AT Christmastime last year,
So many friends that now are gone were here!
So many hopes were glowing then unspoken,
So many faiths were strong that now lie broken,
And loving hearts that trusted without fear;
—At Christmastime last year.

At Christmastime this year
So many of us find the world a drear
And barren desert wherein blooms no rose,
With mountain peaks surrounding it, whose snows
Have chilled our hearts, and turned life's foliage sere
—At Christmastime this year.

At Christmastime next year,
Who knows what changing fortunes may be near?
Take courage, then! For night shall turn to day,
From brightening skies the clouds must roll away,
And faith and hope and love shall all be here
—At Christmastime next year.

—*Helen M. Winslow.*

TWELFTH MONTH.

COLD, gray clouds brooding over pitiful stretches of frozen, gray ground; a hush of waiting in the piercing air, then the noiseless descent of bewildering whiteness, which the wind, in frenzy, whirls into fantastic shapes. The snow has come!

"Over the woodlands, brown and bare,
Over the harvest fields forsaken,
Silent and soft and slow,
Descends the snow."

These short, dark days in the heart of the year are, to many a sad, sensitive soul, depressing. But as we come to the darkest and dreariest of them all, one blessed Day gleams and glows with heavenly luster, the light of which streams out over all the earth. The discontent, the dullness, the depression of our poor hearts are irradiated by the splendor of the wonderful Star which shone nineteen centuries ago above the lowly hut where on stable straw lay a virgin mother with a newborn Babe on her breast—the Child for whose coming weary, sinning humanity had waited and watched with unspeakable yearning. Even the saddest, the most desolate heart must feel some faint throb of joy as the recurrence of the Holy Birthday freshly floods the whole world with the same thrilling music that fell so long ago from angelic lips upon the dull ears of the Judean shepherds, only with a new and deeper meaning now—"Peace and good will, peace and good will!"

December 1.

LORD, another month is dawning, and Thy children come to-day,
All in prayerful expectation, ere they journey on their way;
Some are dreading what may happen ere the weeks shall reach their close;
Yet would fain allay misgiving by the whispered word, "He knows."

Some hear even now the surging of the dark, mysterious sea,
Which shall bear them to the haven where their spirit longs to be;
Even those who are abiding in the secret of Thy power
Want renewing by Thy Spirit, in their service hour by hour;
So before we journey onward, wilt Thou bless us each, indeed,
And bestow on us the pardon and the help we so much need!

—*Charlotte Murray.*

IT is not only true that the pure in heart shall see God; it is also a blessed fact that by seeing God we become pure in heart, changed into the same image, even as the animals of the arctic regions are said to have become white by perpetually gazing upon the spotless snows. God can be seen everywhere and in all things by the eye that watches for Him.—*James Mudge, D.D.*

December 2.

WHEREVER a true woman comes, home is always around her. The stars may be over her head, the glowworms in the night-cold grass may be the fire at her foot; but home is where she is.—*Ruskin.*

THINK that the grass upon thy grave is green;
Think that thou seest thine own empty chair;
The empty garments thou wast wont to wear;
The empty room where long thy haunt hath been.
Think that the lane, the meadow, and the wood,
And the mountain summit feel thy feet no more,
Nor the loud thoroughfare, nor sounding shore;
All mere blank space where thou thyself hath stood.

Amid this thought-created silence say
To thy stripped soul, What am I now, and where?
Then turn and face the petty narrowing care
Which has been gnawing thee for many a day,
And it will die as dies a wailing breeze
Lost in the solemn roar of bounding seas.

—*James Smetham.*

YOU will see the pools and standing waters frozen through the winter, when the little running streams are bounding along between fringes of icy gems. Why is this? The streams have something else to do than stand still to be frozen up. Be you like them. Keep your hearts warm by feeling for others, and your powers active by work done in earnest.

—*John Hall, D.D.*

December 3.

THE year's departing beauty hides
Of wintry storms the sullen threat;
But in thy sternest frown abides
A look of kindly promise yet.

—*Bryant.*

A VAGUE desire to be better, stronger, holier, will come to nothing. Character is built, like the walls of an edifice, by laying one stone upon another. Lay hold of some single fault and mend it. Put

the knife, with God's help, to some ugly besetting sin. Stop that one leak that has let so much foul bilge water into your soul. Put into practice some long-neglected duty. The first step to improvement with one person was to banish his decanters; with another, to discontinue his secular paper on Sunday morning; with another, to ask the pardon of an injured friend; with another, to go after some street Arabs and take them to a mission school. He can never be rich toward God who despises a penny-worth of true piety. Holiness is just the living to the Lord in the least things as well as the greatest; for graces can only be gathered *one by one*.

—*Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.*

December 4.

O MONTH of song and wail!
O month of mirth and cheer!
With voice of storm and gale
Sing out the waning year.

Sing to the woodlands bare,
Sing to the hillside brown,
Drop from the misty air
Thy snowy mantle down!

. . . . . .

And thus, O month of storms,
Give for the flowers that blow,
Old Winter's mythic forms
Of bloom in frost and snow!

—*Professor Benjamin F. Leggett.*

PAUL did not take pleasure in infirmities. He tells us that he was anxious to get rid of the infirmity that clouded his life. But when he saw that

God supplied the grace he began to love the supply better than freedom from infirmity. He saw that it was better to have darkness with stars brought out by it, than all sunshine and no stars; that the cold winds of winter are as necessary for the world's development as the cheerful warmth of spring and summer; that the mantle of snow is as good for earth as its mantle of grass and flowers. But for the snow mantle the mantle of flowers might not be. When a man learns that God's strength is perfected through his infirmity, necessities, persecutions, and distresses, he will by and by begin to welcome them as an angel sent from heaven to minister to him.

—*Rev. A. C. Dixon.*

December 5.

Is thy soul like a cup? Let its little be given,
Not stinted nor churlish, to One
Who will fill thee with love, and His faithfulness prove,
And bless thee in shadow and sun.

—*Margaret E. Sangster.*

EVERY now and then a conscience, among the men and women who live easy, thoughtless lives, is stirred, and some one looks up anxiously, holding up some of the pretty idlenesses in which such people spend their days and nights, and says, "Is this wrong? Is it wicked to do this?" And when they get their answer, "No, certainly not wicked," then they go back and give their whole lives up to doing their innocent little piece of uselessness again. Ah! the question is not whether that is wicked, whether God will punish you for doing

that. The question is whether that thing is keeping other better things away from you; whether behind its little bulk the vast privilege and dignity of duty is hid from you; whether it stands between God and your soul. If it does, then it is an offense to you, and though it be your right hand or your right eye, cut it off, pluck it out, and cast it from you. The advantage and joy will be not in its absence, for you will miss it very sorely, but in what its loss reveals, in the new life which lies beyond it which you will see stretching out and tempting you as soon as it is gone.—*Phillips Brooks.*

December 6.

"IT'S a stumpy world," said Luclarion Grapp; "but some folks step right over their stumps without scarcely knowing when!"—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

LITTLE self-denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness, little silent victories over favorite temptations—these are the silent threads of gold which, when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life that God approves.—*F. W. Farrar, D.D.*

LET us be thankful that the privilege is given us in this world of rebuilding our altars and reconsecrating our lives to God; and though we may grieve over the poverty and tameness of present opportunity as compared with the affluence of earlier and neglected privileges, let us still pour out our hearts in

praise that our chastening was but for a time, and that a fresh beginning is in mercy granted to us.

—Rev. W. O. Holway, U. S. N.

December 7.

O MEN in prosperous homes who live,
Having all blessings earthly wealth can give,
Remember their sad doom
For whom there is no room—

No room in any home, in any bed,
No soft white pillow waiting for the head—
And spare from treasures great
To help their low estate.

May all who have, at this blest season seek
His precious little ones, the poor and weak,
In joyful, sweet accord,
Thus lending to the Lord.

—Phœbe Cary.

EVERY furnace of affliction is reaching the pure gold. Its fires are sometimes built of material disaster; sometimes of misunderstandings that part us from those we love as our own souls, but can never win again in this life; sometimes of physical limitations that make life seem like an arid desert, with oases of God's promises which we only reach when nigh unto death; sometimes a sundered love that leaves a hopeless, blank darkness that no promise of a future heaven, with its blissful meeting and communing, can illume. But always there is a guiding Power and a loving Heart "who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able to bear."—*Christian Union.*

December 8.

THERE shall never be one lost good! what was, shall live as before—
On the earth the broken arcs; in heaven a perfect round.
—*Robert Browning.*

No man can order his life, for it comes flowing over him from behind. The one secret of life and development is not to devise and plan, but to fall in with the forces at work; to do every moment's duty aright—that being the part in the process allotted to us; and let come, not what will—for there is no such thing—but what the Eternal Thought wills for us, has intended for each of us from the first. If men would but believe that they are in process of creation, and consent to be made, they would erelong find themselves able to welcome every pressure of the hand upon them, even when it was felt in pain, and so recognize the divine end in view—the bringing of a son into glory.—*George Macdonald.*

December 9.

BE large Methodists. There are Methodists who are little and literal and sectarian. There are Methodists who are large and liberal and catholic. They are Methodist *Christians.* They hold with the heart the essential verities. They keep the intellect open and active in the study of the real meanings, bearings, and best modes of expressing these verities. They have an enlightened and tender and healthy conscience. They seek to cultivate all their varied powers, while they live and

trust and rest in Christ. They let their light shine. They do not ridicule the dear old tin lanterns, but they themselves try to shine through clean, clear glass. They try to be believing and busy Christians three hundred and sixty-five days a year. Epworths, be wise, bright, broad, busy, steady, many-sided saints. Begin now!—*Bishop Vincent.*

BORNE by a Power resistless and unseen
We know not whither,
We look out through the gloom with troubled mien;
How came we hither?

Darkness before and after. Blank, dim walls
On either side,
Against which our dull vision beats and falls,
Met and defied.

Shrouded in mystery that leaves no room
To guess aright,
We rush, uncertain, to a certain doom—
When lo—the light!

—*Grace Denio Litchfield.*

December 10.

MEN every day measure the Christ by themselves. How much better if we measured ourselves by the Christ!—*Lew Wallace.*

BEAUTIFUL is the lily when, springing from its vigorous stalk, it lifts its pure white face to the sun; but when its stem bends with weakness, its face is wrinkled and its whiteness fades into a dirty, yellowish tint, it is a pitiful, repulsive object. It is even so with human character. When it is adorned with

the graces of the spirit of Christ, and stands erect in its righteousness, and is radiantly white with the purity which springs from the root of faith, then it is indeed a thing of beauty in the eyes of both God and man. But if unbelief, like a worm at the root of the flower, eats away the strength of its faith, if it becomes crooked through unrighteousness, if its whiteness becomes spotted with the stains of transgressions, then, alas! its beauty perishes and it is like a wilted flower, an object to be pitied and condemned. Be careful, therefore, O Christian, of thy faith in these days of daring unbelief! Thy beauty, thy strength, thy life, depend upon thy faith.—*Daniel Wise, D.D.*

December 11.

'Twas but a little light she bore,
While standing at the open door;
A little light, a feeble spark,
And yet it shone out through the dark
With cheerful ray, and gleamed afar
As brightly as the polar star.

A little light dispels the gloom
That gathers in the shadowed room
Where want and sickness find their prey,
And night seems longer than the day,
And hearts with many troubles cope
Uncheered by one slight ray of hope.

It may be little we can do
To help another, it is true;
But better is a little spark
Of kindness when the way is dark,
Than one should miss the road to heaven
For lack of light we might have given.—*Anon.*

How good it is for those who are bereaved and sorrowful that our Christian festivals point forward and upward as well as backward; that the eternal joy to which we are drawing ever nearer is linked to the earthly joy which has passed away.

—Mrs. Charles.

December 12.

To be like Him; to keep
Unspotted from the world; to reap
But where He leads; to think,
To dream, to hope as one who would but drink
Of purity and grow
More like the Christ; to go
Through time's sweet labyrinths pure and brave and true;
To stand sin's tests; to dare, to do
For Him, though all the price
Be stained in dye of sacrifice,
This were to be
Sustained by His infinity,
And given
A foretaste of the ecstasy of heaven.

—George Klingle.

"FLASH" lives, as well as lights. Hide-and-seek Christians; now you see them, and now you don't. One thing to-day, and another to-morrow, and not much of anything the day after. In times of revival burning with a brilliancy and a warmth which fairly puts to shame those of less flame power; but when the revival is past, dying out in darkness that lasts until the next time of quickening. Now the white of an almost ideal Christian character; and again the red light of anger, or the green light of envy, or

the yellow light of jealousy. . . . However useful and desirable a flash light may be in the maritime world, it has no place in the kingdom of God. The lights of the world are to shine with a clear, steady, uninterrupted radiance through all the hours of the night. Fixed lights, not flash lights, glorify God and help men.—*Rev. J. K. Wilson.*

December 13.

"Do not pray for crutches, but for wings."

LIVE and love—
Doing both nobly, because lowlily;
Live and work strongly, because patiently.
—*E. B. Browning.*

ASK God, before you go down stairs, for faith, "the eye of the soul," so that you may walk all day long "as seeing Him who is invisible." When you are tempted to indulge in something wrong—idleness, or carelessness, or selfishness—this will help you to give it up at once, and forsake it; for how can you give way to it when your eye meets His? When something makes you afraid, this will make you brave and peaceful; for how can you fear anything when your God is so near?

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

December 14.

LORD, I would offer Thee
A heart's untarnished gold,
And yet how can it be
When all there is in me
Is touched with blight and mold?

I find within no thought
  So holy that it may
Unshamed to Thee be brought,
Except as it hath caught
  From Thee a hallowing ray.

Yet all I am is Thine.
  Through sins and flaws and stains
I feel Thy presence shine.
Take me, and make divine
  All that uncleansed remains!

Lord, of Thyself, not much
  In me canst Thou behold,
And yet Thou savest such;
The magic of Thy touch
  Transmutes my dross to gold.

Contrition Thou dost prize
  All sacrifice above.
Dear Lord, I dare arise
And look into Thine eyes,
  Because I know Thy love.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

December 15.

"FROM the plenitude that waits on one life falls a crumb that stays the craving of another."

WE crave the roadside-recognitions which give praise for the good deed attempted, pity for the hard luck and the fall, a hand-lift now and then to ease the burden's chafe, and now and then a word of sympathy in the step-step-stepping that takes us through the dust. And this is all that most of us can wait to give, for we, too, are here on business.

You cannot step my journey for me, cannot carry me on your back, cannot do me any great service; but it makes a world of difference to me whether I do my part in the world with, or without, these little helps which fellow-travelers exchange. "I am busy, Johnny, and can't help it," said the father, writing away when the little fellow hurt his finger. "Yes, you could—you might have said 'O!'" sobbed Johnny. There's a Johnny in tears inside of all of us upon occasions. The old Quaker was right: "I expect to pass through this life but once. If there is any kindness or any good thing I can do to my fellow-beings, let me do it now. I shall pass this way but once."—*Rev. W. C. Gannett.*

December 16.

IN golden youth, when seems the earth
A summer land for singing mirth,
When souls are glad and hearts are light,
And not a shadow lurks in sight,
We do not know it, but there lies
Somewhere, veiled under evening skies,
A garden all must some time see,
Somewhere lies our Gethsemane.

. . . . . .

All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate,
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
"Not mine, but Thine;" who only pray,
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane.

—*Anon.*

To live in other lives, to do something for other people, to gladden those about us, is the true way to help ourselves. Each one has a work to do in this great social organism, which he may shirk only at his peril. Here are his school and workshop. The real men and women are those who do something for the race. That is a defective and worthless life plan which has in it no provision for ministering to others. To live to oneself is to live a narrow, cheap, and worthless life; to secure the true riches our life must give out its fragrance to fill all the circle in which we move.—*David Sherman, D.D.*

December 17.

PEOPLE will go anywhere barefoot to preach their faith, but must be well bribed to practice it.

—*Ruskin.*

THE centuries are God's days; within His hand,
Held in the hollow, as a balance swings,
Less than its dust, are all our temporal things.
. . . We have no glass to sweep
His universe. A hand's-breadth distant dies,
To our poor ears, the strain whose echoes keep
All heaven glad. We do but grope and creep.
There always is a daystar in the skies!

—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

THERE is no road to heaven but that of sacrifice, that of cross-bearing; we must go in this narrow way or not at all. But it is also a way of joy, a path of pleasantness and peace. You must not expect to become a Christian by accident. That blessed

experience must be the result of deliberate determination, of intelligent seeking, and of faithful enduring.—*Robert S. MacArthur, D.D.*

December 18.

I WOULD not if I could repeat
A life which still is good and sweet;
I keep in age, as in my prime,
A not uncheerful step with time,
And, grateful for all blessings sent,
I go the common way, content
To make no new experiment.
On easy terms with law and fate,
For what must be I calmly wait,
And trust the path I cannot see—
That God is good sufficeth me.
And when at last upon life's play
The curtain falls, I only pray
That hope may lose itself in truth,
And age in heaven's immortal youth,
And all our loves and longing prove
The foretaste of diviner love!

—*J. G. Whittier.*

"WHAT dirty, dreadful, disgusting stuff!" exclaims a man regarding that peculiarly unpleasant compound, the mud of London streets. "Hold, my friend," says Ruskin. "Not so dreadful after all. What are the elements of this mud? First there is sand, but when its particles are crystallized according to the law of its nature, what is nicer than clean white sand? And when that which enters into it is arranged according to a still higher law, we have the matchless opal. What else have we in this

mud? Clay. And the materials of clay, when the particles are arranged according to their higher laws, make the brilliant sapphire. What other ingredients enter into the London mud? Soot. And soot in its crystallized perfection forms the diamond. There is but one other—water. And water when distilled according to the higher law of its nature, forms the dewdrop resting in exquisite perfection in the heart of the rose." So in the muddy, lost soul of man is hidden the image of his Creator, and God will do His best to find His opals, His sapphires, His diamonds and dewdrops.

—Rainsford.

December 19.

ONE Christmas some one sent Mr. Whittier a gentian flower pressed between two panes of glass. Seen from one side it appeared only a blurred mass of something without beauty. But seen from the other side the exquisite beauty of the flower appeared, in all its delicate loveliness. Whether the gift was lovely or not to the view depended on the side from which one looked at it. The poet hung the gift on the window pane, putting the blurred side out and the lovely flower side toward his room. Those who passed by without, looking up, marked only a "gray disk of clouded glass," seeing no beauty; but the poet, sitting within, looked at the token, and saw outlined against the winter sky all the exquisite loveliness of the flower:—

"They cannot from their outlook see
The perfect grace it hath for me;
For there the flower, whose fringes through
The frosty breath of autumn blew,
Turns from without its face of bloom
To the warm tropic of my room,
As fair as when beside its brook
The hue of bending skies it took.

"But deeper meanings come to me,
My half-immortal flower, from thee;
Man judges from a partial view,
None ever yet his brother knew;
The Eternal Eye that sees the whole
May better read the darkened soul,
And find, to outward sense denied,
The flower upon its inmost side."

Too often we look upon the blurred side of actions—yes, of people too. We do not see the loveliness that there is on the other side. We are all continually misinterpreting others. There is a flower side in many an act which we condemn because we see only the blurred side. Let us train ourselves to believe the best always of people and of actions, and find some beauty in everything.

—J. R. Miller, D.D.

December 20.

ANY man can sing by day; but only he whose heart has been tuned by the gracious hand of Jehovah can sing in the darkness. The things of earth may satisfy for the hours of prosperity; but only the peace of God can give gladness in the darkness of adversity. God gives joy in sorrow; and

when the sad one sings through his tears, then the Lord comes out to him with new and more tender assurances, so that by his very hymn he is made more gladsome. That which is born of trust rises into rapture.—*William M. Taylor, D.D.*

A DREARY month of weeping,
Of cloud and fog and rain,
Is sorrowful December,
And all the winds complain.
For trees are bare and flowers are gone,
And birds have hushed all song,
And days are short and sunless,
And nights are dark and long.
. . . . .
But let us wait in patience,
The days are swift to go,
And even sorrow does not stay
Long on the earth below;
Some days must be for weeping,
But God and heaven remain,
And after nights of darkness
The sun will shine again.

—*Marianne Farningham.*

DUTY is the great mountain road to God.

—*Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones.*

December 21.

SPEECHLESS Sorrow sat with me;
I was sighing wearily;
Lamp and fire were out; the rain
Wildly beat the window pane;
In the dark we heard a knock,
And a hand was on the lock;
One in waiting spake to me,
Saying sweetly,
"I am come to sup with thee!"

All my room was dark and damp;
"Sorrow," said I, "trim the lamp;
Light the fire, and cheer thy face;
Set the guest chair in its place."
And again I heard the knock;
In the dark I found the lock;
"Enter, I have turned the key!—
Enter, stranger!
Who art come to sup with me."

Opening wide the door, He came;
But I could not speak His name;
In the guest chair took His place,
But I could not see His face;
When my cheerful fire was beaming,
When my little lamp was gleaming,
Lo! my Master
Was the guest who supped with me!

—Harriet McEwen Kimball.

December 22.

ONE man is covetous; another man is generous but passionate; another man is under the thrall of evil appetite. The man is conscious of the habit. It is intrenched and powerful. The place of the habit is the place of struggle for him. He feels toward it as the man with a withered hand felt toward the command to stretch it forth. The hand of ability over that habit seems withered away. What is he to do? Fasten faith in Christ, and attempt toward the stretching forth of the shriveled ability. There is definitely nothing else that can be done. Waiting only results in a hand more withered. If it is hard to give, *give* in Christ's name.

If passionateness flashes up, in Christ's name gather what power one has to instantly put its fires out. If evil appetite call, look to Christ and refuse to feed the hunger. And just as, and just as certainly as, upon the seed trying to grow the great sun pours his light and heat, and makes it able for its June leafage and its September fruitage, will the strong and loving Christ shed power upon every such attempt. The hand of ability over the bad habit, instead of being withered before it, shall find itself sovereign over it.—*Rev. Wayland Hoyt, D.D.*

December 23.

So many hillsides, crowned with rugged rocks!
So many simple shepherds keeping flocks
In many moonlit fields! but, only they—
So lone, so long ago, so far away—
On that one winter's night, at Bethlehem,
To have white angels singing lauds for them
. . . . . .
Ah, thrice-blest shepherds! suffer if we creep
Back through the tangled thicket of the years
To graze in your fair flock, to strain our ears
With listening herdsmen, if, perchance, one note
Of such high singing in the fine air float;
If any rock thrills yet with that great strain
We did not hear, and shall not hear again;
If any olive leaf at Bethlehem
Lisps still one syllable vouchsafed to them;
If some stream, conscious still—some breeze—be stirred
With echo of th' immortal words ye heard.

—*Edwin Arnold.*

In the midst of all came the blessed Christmastide. Yes, even into this world that has rolled its

seething burden of sin and pain and shame and conflict along the listening depths through waiting cycles of God's eternity, was Christ once born.

—*Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.*

December 24.

LORD, for the lonely heart
I pray apart;
Now, for the son of sorrow
Whom this to-morrow
Rejoiceth not, O Lord,
Hear my weak word!

For lives too bitter to be borne,
For the tempted and the torn,
For the prisoner in the cell,
For the shame lip doth not tell,
For the haggard suicide,
Peace, peace this Christmastide!

Into the desert, trod
By the long sick, O God!
Into the patient gloom
Of that small room
Where lies the child of pain—
Of all neglected most—be fain
To enter, healing, and remain.
. . . . .
For the empty, aching home
Where the silent footsteps come,
Where the unseen face looks on,
Where the hand-clasp is not felt,
Where the dearest eyes are gone,
Where the portrait on the wall
Stirs and struggles as to speak,
Where the light breath from the hall
Calls the color to the cheek,

Where the voice breaks in the hymn
When the sunset burneth dim,
Where the late, large tear will start,
Frozen by the broken heart,
Where the lesson is to learn
How to live, to grieve, to yearn,
How to bear and how to bow;
O, the Christmas that is fled!
Lord of living and of dead,
Comfort Thou!

—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

December 25.

"NOT to be ministered unto, but to minister, is the secret of Christmas Day; the secret of all joy, peace, growth, and power."

WE speak of a Merry Christmas
And many a Happy New Year;
But each in his heart is thinking
Of those that are not here.

—*Longfellow.*

To many ears Christmas bells are set to a minor key. Their note is melancholy. They awaken painful memories. Since last year's happy reunion, desolation has come. Death has claimed our treasures. . . . A hundred things just at this time remind us of our loss, and open again the wounds of our sorrow. These are Christmas shadows. But let us not dwell in bitterness upon our losses. . . . Be patient. Be trustful. Dry those scalding tears. Look up! Look up! Drive out the lengthening shadows. There is an earth side and there is a heaven side. "The things which are seen are tem-

poral, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Make this Christmas time forever memorable, because on that day you place thought, will, affection, and life upon the heaven side.—*J. F. Berry, D.D.*

LET us do as the Christ did: Give ourselves for others; deny ourselves that those who need may have a share in the good which has been given to us. Thus by giving we shall first know the joy of having, and we shall truly join in the chorus that sounded over Bethlehem on the first Christmas morning. Our deeds of help will have more music in them than cathedral chimes in the tower, or cathedral carols in the choir, and from humble homes and happy hearts will sound the antiphon of the angels' song. Bring holly and mistletoe, hemlock and cedar; festoon the walls with vines of smilax, soft and green and tender; scatter flowers; light tapers on Christmas trees; put greens on Christian graves; fill house and street and earth and heaven with shouts of exultation!—*Bishop Vincent.*

December 26.

THOU who wast born and cradled in a manger,
Hast gladdened our poor earth with hope and rest;
O, best Belovèd, come not as a stranger;
But tarry, Lord, our Friend and Christmas guest!
—*Anon.*

THE only true service is vital service. What you offer to-day will not be the same that you brought last week—or it ought not to be. There should be a deeper knowledge of the Lord, through experience,

it may be, of suffering which makes the offering really richer. Many Christians have a strange idea of accounting for sickness and sorrow. They say, "Ah, yes! We think the Lord cannot do His work without us, but He lays us down to show us that He can." It seems to me the greatest wonder is that He can do *with* us; and can use such miserable bad pens to write His sweet messages, and such stammering tongues to carry His words, and such faithless hearts on which to write His name and His tender love tokens.—*Anna Shipton.*

December 27.

LORD, as the years still fly,
Do Thou so guide us by Thy grace
That we may fully do Thy will,
And each appointed task fulfill,
Then as each year its course has run,
We shall not mourn, as now we do,
The good resolved, but yet undone,
The sins we vowed we would eschew;
But, led by Thee,
Our way shall be
Blessed, as the years go by,
Until at length we see Thy face
And be forever glad.

—*New York Observer.*

Is your religion winsome? Does it charm and attract? Does it show itself in a pleasant face, a cheerful smile, gentle tones, courteous manners? Is it kindly and thoughtful for the comfort of others, willing to serve, slow to push personal claims, quick to sympathize and help? Or is it sour and hard,

grim and frowning, self-asserting and domineering, driving away more than it draws? Look into this matter, brother! Carefully consider this question, sister! See whether or not you are properly representing Christ, O Christian!—*Zion's Herald.*

"AND the birds knew Him, and the fields and flowers,
But His world knew Him not."

December 28.

UNION with Christ, "the word abiding in us," changes the outlook. He is now our life; where He is, there we shall be; when He shall appear, we shall appear with Him; "because He lives, we shall live also." The feeling of helplessness is gone; the craving for sympathy is satisfied; the eternal safety of destiny is secured. We are no longer atoms, floating now in sunbeams and now quenched in darkness, blown by caprice and wafted hither and yon by circumstances, with no fixed destiny, no discerned future; but are convoys for heaven, freighted with blessings from heaven, riding secure in harbors near heaven—anchored in heaven. Dying does not end, but only interrupts, our living.

"There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death."

—*O. H. Tiffany, D.D.*

LET us see to it that the upper regions of our lives toward God are not more plentifully watered than those lower regions which cover our conduct

and our connection with our fellow-creatures. Our prayer meeting hours ought not to be any more rich or fair or fruitful than those hours spent in our shops or counting-rooms or at our own firesides. People do not climb up to see how we look when we hold devout communion with our heavenly Father, but they do watch us, with eyes as sharp as a lynx, to see how we behave in our daily walk and conversation. The lowly valleys in which we meet our friends and business associates ought to be just as verdant and well watered as those Sabbath elevations on which we "see no man but Jesus only."

—*Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.*

December 29.

DECEMBER'S sun is low; the year is old;
Through fallen leaves and flying flakes of snow
The aged pilgrim climbs the mountain cold—
But look! the summit's in the afterglow!

The fierce winds hold their breath; the rocks give way;
The stars look down to guide her up the height·
And all around her lonely footsteps play
Auroral waves of spiritual light.

Nothing before her but the peak, the sky!
Nothing? Ah, look! beyond is everything!
Over those mountains greener valleys lie;
A happier New Year, an eternal spring!

—*Lucy Larcom.*

December 30.

A FRIEND stands at the door;
In either tight-closed hand
Hiding rich gifts, three hundred and threescore;
Waiting to strew them daily o'er the land
Even as seed the sower.

Friend, come thou like a friend,
And whether bright thy face,
Or dim with clouds we cannot comprehend,
We'll hold our patient hands, each in his place,
And trust thee to the end;
Knowing thou leadest onward to those spheres
Where there are neither days, nor months, nor years.
—*Dinah Muloch Craik.*

IT is out of silence that all the marvelous things of human action, all the splendid things of human courage, all the sublime offerings of human faith, have sprung. When the great tree falls in a sudden storm, we find that, for all its external bravery, it was decayed and weak within. The real strength of human life lies there also. Societies, governments, nations, fall when the secret chambers of individual hearts grow weak. But those secret chambers cannot be filled from the world outside. They can only be filled from within, at the cisterns of Infinite Silence.—*S. J. Barrows, D.D.*

December 31.

WHAT wilt thou do with the year
That is dawning so fresh and clear—
Dawning in whiteness,
Dawning in brightness—
What wilt thou do with the year?

The world cries: "Give it to me!
I will deck it with flowers for thee,
I will fill it with mirth and glee;
And if that will not suffice,
I will give thee a higher price,

I will crown it with golden days
Of wealth and honor and praise,
And fill it with incense sweet,
Ascending around thy feet!"
And the end? "O! far away
Is that strange and misty day."

What wilt thou do with the year
That is dawning so fresh and clear—
  Dawning in whiteness,
  Dawning in brightness—
What wilt thou do with the year?

The world says: "Give it to me!
I demand it all of thee;
Think not from my claim to flee,
For none can elude my grasp,
Or loosen my steady clasp;
Thou must go with me all the way,
And my every word obey."
And the end? "O! that is naught!
Thou need'st not give it a thought."

What wilt thou do with the year?
A voice comes soft and clear,
  Comes in thy sadness,
  Comes in thy gladness—
What wilt thou do with the year?

The Lord speaks: "Give it to Me!
With My life I ransomed thee,
And I come to set thee free.
My service is constant peace,
And blessings with sure increase,
Joy-springs that never run dry,
A work that will satisfy!"
And the end? "A glorious day
And a crown of life for aye!"

—*Sarah Geraldina Stock*